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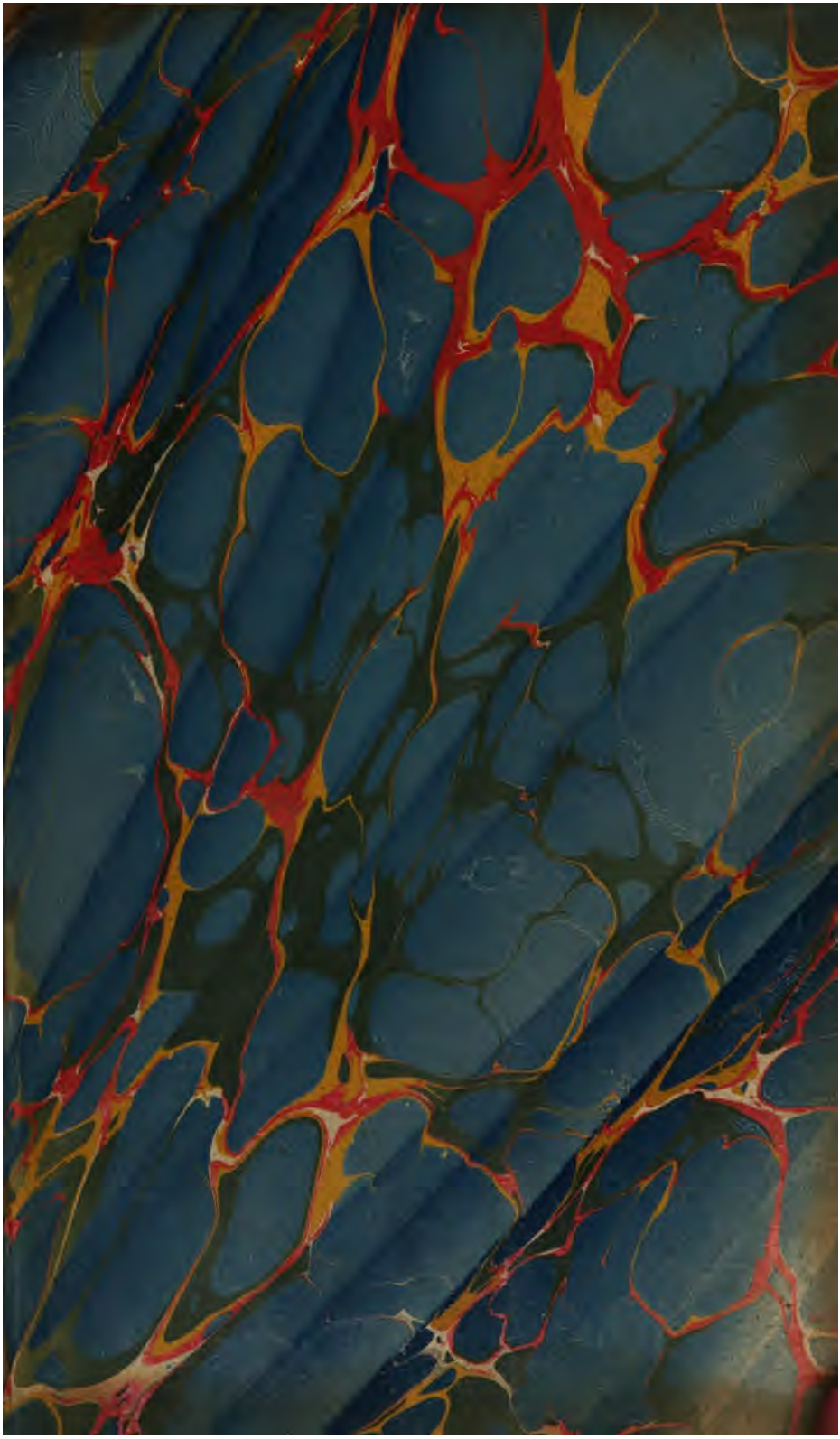
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
1888-1911



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1821

THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

VOL. I.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D. D.

From a Model by Tassie.

Drawn by J. Robertson. Engraved by W. E. Tate.

Published Sept. 10, 1821, by T. Cadell, in the Strand, London.

THE

[illegible] AND J. RIVINGTON; J. [illegible]; J. CUTHELL; J. AND W. T. CLARKE; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN; E. JEFFERY; J. BOOKER; J. AND A. ARCH; BLACK, KINGSBURY, PARBURY, AND ALLEN; J. AND T. GRAY; JOHN RICHARDSON; J. M. RICHARDSON; J. CARPENTER; R. H. EVANS; J. MURRAY; J. HARDING; W. STEWART; BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY; SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES; OGLE AND CO.; W. GINGER; R. S. KIRBY; G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER J. AND T. ALLMAN; G. MACKIE; AND SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL.

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WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, AND PRINCIPAL
OF THE UNIVERSITY, OF EDINBURGH,
HISTORIOGRAPHER TO HIS MAJESTY FOR SCOTLAND,
AND
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF HISTORY
AT MADRID.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY DUGALD STEWART, F.R.S. EDIN.

A NEW EDITION:
IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL; F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON; J. NUNN; J. CUTHELL; J. AND W. T. CLARKE; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN; E. JEFFERY; J. BOOKER; J. AND A. ARCH; BLACK, KINGSBURY, PARBURY, AND ALLEN; J. AND T. GRAY; JOHN RICHARDSON; J. M. RICHARDSON; J. CARPENTER; R. H. EVANS; J. MURRAY; J. HARDING; W. STEWART; BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY; SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES; OGLE AND CO.; W. GINGER; R. S. KIRBY; G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER J. AND T. ALLMAN; G. MACKIE; AND SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL.

1821.

PRINTED BY R. AND A. TAYLOR,
SHOE-LANE, LONDON.

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

I DELIVER this book to the world with all the diffidence and anxiety natural to an author on publishing his first performance. The time I have employed, and the pains I have taken, in order to render it worthy of the public approbation, it is, perhaps, prudent to conceal, until it be known whether that approbation shall ever be bestowed upon it.

But as I have departed, in many instances, from former historians, as I have placed facts in a different light, and have drawn characters with new colours, I ought to account for this conduct to my readers; and to produce the evidence on which, at the distance of two centuries, I presume to contradict the testimony of less remote, or even of contemporary historians.

The transactions in Mary's reign gave rise to two parties, which were animated against each other with the fiercest political hatred embittered by religious zeal. Each of these produced historians of considerable merit, who adopted all their sentiments and defended all their actions. Truth was not the

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sole object of these authors. Blinded by prejudices, and heated by the part which they themselves had acted in the scenes they describe, they wrote an apology for a faction, rather than the history of their country. Succeeding historians have followed these guides almost implicitly, and have repeated their errors and misrepresentations. But as the same passions which inflamed parties in that age have descended to their posterity; as almost every event in Mary's reign has become the object of doubt or of dispute; the eager spirit of controversy soon discovered, that without some evidence more authentic and more impartial than that of such historians, none of the points in question could be decided with certainty. Records have therefore been searched, original papers have been produced, and public archives, as well as the repositories of private men, have been ransacked by the zeal and curiosity of writers of different parties. The attention of Cecil to collect whatever related to that period, in which he acted so conspicuous a part, hath provided such an immense store of original papers for illustrating this part of the English and Scottish history, as are almost sufficient to satisfy the utmost avidity of an antiquary. Sir Robert Cotton (whose library is now the property of the Public) made great and valuable additions to Cecil's collection; and from this magazine, Digges, the compilers of the Caballa, Anderson, Keith, Haynes, Forbes, have drawn most of the papers which they have printed. No History of Scotland, that merits any degree of attention, has appeared since these Collections were published. By consulting them,

I have been enabled, in many instances, to correct the inaccuracies of former historians, to avoid their mistakes, and to detect their misrepresentations.

But many important papers have escaped the notice of those industrious Collectors; and, after all they have produced to light, much still remained in darkness, unobserved or unpublished. It was my duty to search for these; and I found this unpleasant task attended with considerable utility.

The Library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh contains not only a large collection of original papers relating to the affairs of Scotland, but copies of others no less curious, which have been preserved by Sir Robert Cotton, or are extant in the Public Offices in England. Of all these the Curators of that Library were pleased to allow me the perusal.

Though the British Museum be not yet open to the public, Dr. Birch, whose obliging disposition is well known, procured me access to that noble collection, which is worthy the magnificence of a great and polished nation.

That vast and curious collection of papers relating to the reign of Elizabeth, which was made by Dr. Forbes, and of which he published only two volumes, having been purchased since his death by the Lord Viscount Royston, His Lordship was so good as to allow me the use of fourteen volumes in quarto, containing that part of them which is connected with my subject.

Sir Alexander Dick communicated to me a very valuable collection of original papers, in two large volumes. They relate chiefly to the reign of James. Many of them are marked with Archbishop Spotis-

wood's hand; and it appears from several passages in his history, that he had perused them with great attention.

Mr. Calderwood, an eminent Presbyterian Clergyman of the last century, compiled an History of Scotland from the beginning of the reign of James V. to the death of James VI. in six large volumes; wherein he has inserted many papers of consequence, which are no where else to be found. This History has not been published; but a copy of it, which still remains in manuscript, in the possession of the church of Scotland, was put into my hands by my worthy friend the Reverend Dr. George Wishart, principal Clerk of the Church.

Sir David Dalrymple not only communicated to me the papers which he has collected relating to Gowrie's conspiracy; but, by explaining to me his sentiments with regard to that problematical passage in the Scottish history, has enabled me to place that transaction in a light which dispels much of the darkness and confusion in which it has been hitherto involved.

Mr. Goodall, though he knew my sentiments with regard to the conduct and character of Queen Mary to be extremely different from his own, communicated to me a volume of manuscripts in his possession, which contains a great number of valuable papers copied from the originals in the Cottonian Library and Paper Office, by the late Reverend Mr. Crawford, Regius Professor of Church History in the University of Edinburgh. I likewise received from him the original Register of letters kept by the Regent Lennox during his administration.

I have consulted all these papers, as far as I thought they could be of any use towards illustrating that period of which I wrote the history. With what success I have employed them to confirm what was already known, to ascertain what was dubious, or to determine what was controverted, the Public must judge.

I might easily have drawn, from the different repositories to which I had access, as many papers as would have rendered my Appendix equal in size to the most bulky collection of my predecessors. But I have satisfied myself with publishing a few of the most curious among them, to which I found it necessary to appeal as vouchers for my own veracity. None of these, as far as I can recollect, ever appeared in any former collection.

I have added a *Critical Dissertation concerning the murder of King Henry, and the genuineness of the Queen's letters to Bothwell.* The facts and observations which relate to Mary's letters, I owe to my friend Mr. John Davidson, one of the Clerks of the Signet, who hath examined this point with his usual acuteness and industry.

PREFACE

TO

THE ELEVENTH EDITION.

IT is now twenty-eight years since I published the History of Scotland. During that time I have been favoured by my friends with several remarks upon it; and various strictures have been made by persons, who entertained sentiments different from mine, with respect to the transactions in the reign of Queen Mary. From whatever quarter information came, in whatever mode it has been communicated, I have considered it calmly and with attention. Wherever I perceived that I had erred, either in relating events or in delineating characters, I have, without hesitation, corrected those errors. Wherever I am satisfied that my original ideas were just and well-founded, I adhere to them; and, resting upon their conformity to evidence already produced, I enter into no discussion or controversy in order to support them. Wherever the opportunity of consulting original papers either in print or in manuscript, to which I had not formerly access, has enabled me to throw new light upon any part of the History, I have made alterations and additions, which I flatter myself will be found to be of some importance.

College of Edinburgh,
March 5th, 1787.

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.F.R.S.E.

LATE PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
AND HISTORIOGRAPHER TO HIS MAJESTY
FOR SCOTLAND.

[Read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE principal authorities for the biographical details in the following pages were communicated to me by Dr. Robertson's eldest son, Mr. William Robertson, Advocate. To him I am indebted, not only for the original letters with which he has enabled me to gratify the curiosity of my Readers, but for every other aid which he could be prompted to contribute, either by regard for his father's memory, or by friendship for myself.

My information with respect to the earlier part of Dr. Robertson's life was derived almost entirely from one of his oldest and most valued friends, the Rev. Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk.

It is proper for me to add, that this Memoir was read at different meetings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and was destined for a place in their Transactions. The length to which it has extended, suggested the idea of a separate publication, and the addition of an Appendix.

During the long interval which has elapsed since it was composed, a few sentences have been occasionally inserted, in which a reference is made to later criticisms on Dr. Robertson's writings. I mention this circumstance, in order to account for some slight anachronisms.

DUGALD STEWART.

College of Edinburgh,
16th May, 1801.

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D.

SECTION FIRST.

From Dr. ROBERTSON'S *Birth till the Publication of his History of Scotland.*

WILLIAM ROBERTSON, D.D. late Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and Historiographer to His Majesty for Scotland, was the son of the Reverend William Robertson, Minister of the old Gray-Friars' Church, and of Eleanor Pitcairn, daughter of David Pitcairn, Esq. of Dreghorn. By his father he was descended from the Robertsons of Gladney in the county of Fife; a branch of the respectable family of the same name, which has, for many generations, possessed the estate of Struan in Perthshire.

He was born in 1721, at Borthwick (in the county of Mid Lothian), where his father was then Minister; and received the first rudiments of

his education at the school of Dalkeith, which, from the high reputation of Mr. Leslie as a teacher, was at that time resorted to from all parts of Scotland. In 1733, he again joined his father's family on their removal to Edinburgh; and towards the end of the same year, he entered on his course of academical study.

From this period till the year 1759, when, by the publication of his Scottish History, he fixed a new æra in the literary annals of his country, the habits and occurrences of his life were such as to supply few materials for Biography; and the imagination is left to fill up a long interval spent in the silent pursuit of letters, and enlivened by the secret anticipation of future eminence. His genius was not of that forward and irregular growth, which forces itself prematurely on public notice; and it was only a few intimate and discerning friends, who, in the native vigour of his powers, and in the patient culture by which he laboured to improve them, perceived the earnests of a fame that was to last for ever.

The large proportion of Dr. Robertson's life which he thus devoted to obscurity will appear the more remarkable, when contrasted with his early and enthusiastic love of study. Some of his oldest common-place books, still in his son's possession, (dated in the years 1735, 1736, and 1737,) bear marks of a persevering assiduity, unexampled perhaps at so tender an age; and the motto prefixed to all of them (*Vita sine literis mors est*) attests how soon those views and sentiments were formed, which, to his latest hour, continued to guide and to dignify his ambition. In times such as the

present, when literary distinction leads to other rewards, the labours of the studious are often prompted by motives very different from the hope of fame, or the inspiration of genius; but when Dr. Robertson's career commenced, these were the only incitements which existed to animate his exertions. The trade of Authorship was unknown in Scotland; and the rank which that country had early acquired among the learned nations of Europe, had, for many years, been sustained entirely by a small number of eminent men, who distinguished themselves by an honourable and disinterested zeal in the ungainful walks of abstract science.

Some presages, however, of better times were beginning to appear. The productions of Thomson, of Armstrong, and of Mallet, were already known and admired in the metropolis of England, and an impulse had been given to the minds of the rising generation, by the exertions of a few able and enlightened men, who filled important stations in the Scottish Universities. Dr. Hutcheson of Glasgow, by his excellent writings, and still more by his eloquent lectures, had diffused, among a numerous race of pupils, a liberality of sentiment, and a refinement of taste, unknown before in this part of the island; and the influence of his example had extended in no inconsiderable degree, to that seminary where Dr. Robertson received his education. The Professorship of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh was then held by Sir John Pringle, afterwards President of the Royal Society of London; who, if he did not rival Dr. Hutcheson's

abilities, was not surpassed by him in the variety of his scientific attainments, or in a warm zeal for the encouragement of useful knowledge. His efforts were ably seconded by the learning and industry of Dr. Stevenson, Professor of Logic; to whose valuable prelections (particularly to his illustrations of Aristotle's Poetics and of Longinus on the Sublime) Dr. Robertson has been often heard to say that he considered himself as more deeply indebted than to any other circumstance in his academical studies. The bent of his genius did not incline him to mathematical or physical pursuits, notwithstanding the strong recommendations they derived from the popular talents of Mr. Maclaurin; but he could not fail to receive advantage from the eloquence with which that illustrious man knew how to adorn the most abstracted subjects, as well as from that correctness and purity in his compositions which still entitle him to a high rank among our best writers, and which no Scottish author of the same period had been able to attain.

A number of other learned and respectable men, of whose names the greater part now exist in tradition only, were then resident in Edinburgh. A club, or society of these*, carried on for some years a private correspondence with Dr. Berkeley, the celebrated Bishop of Cloyne, on the subject of his metaphysical publications; and are said to have been numbered by him among the few who com-

* Called the *Rankenian* Club, from the name of the person in whose tavern its meetings were held. The learned and ingenious Dr. Wallace, author of the Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind, was one of the leading members.

pletely comprehended the scope of his reasonings against the existence of *matter*. The influence of this society in diffusing that spirit of philosophical research, which has since become so fashionable in Scotland, has often been mentioned to me by those who had the best opportunities of observing the rise and progress of Scottish literature.

I have entered into these details, partly as they suggest some circumstances which conspired with Dr. Robertson's natural inclination in fixing his studious habits; and partly as they help to account for the sudden transition which Scotland made about this period, from the temporary obscurity into which it had sunk, to that station which it has since maintained in the republic of letters. A great stock both of genius and of learning existed in the country; but the difficulty of overcoming the peculiarities of a provincial idiom, seemed to shut up every avenue to fame by means of the press, excepting in those departments of science where the nature of the subject is such as to dispense with the graces of composition.

Dr. Robertson's ambition was not to be checked by these obstacles; and he appears, from a very early period of life, to have employed, with much perseverance, the most effectual means for surmounting them. Among other expedients, he was accustomed to exercise himself in the practice of translation; and he had even gone so far in the cultivation of this very difficult art, as to have thought seriously of preparing for the press a version of *Marcus Antoninus*, when he was anticipated, by an anonymous publication at Glasgow, in

the execution of his design. In making choice of this author, he was probably not a little influenced by that partiality with which (among the writings of Heathen Moralists) he always regarded the remains of the Stoical Philosophy.

Nor was his ambition limited to the attainment of the honours that reward the industry of the recluse student. Anxious to distinguish himself by the utility of his labours in that profession to which he had resolved to devote his talents, and looking forward, it is probable, to the active share he was afterwards to take in the Ecclesiastical Policy of Scotland, he aspired to add to the art of classical composition, the powers of a persuasive and commanding speaker. With this view, he united with some of his contemporaries, during the last years of his attendance at College, in the formation of a society, where their object was to cultivate the study of elocution, and to prepare themselves, by the habits of extemporary discussion and debate, for conducting the business of popular assemblies. Fortunately for Dr. Robertson, he had here associates to contend with worthy of himself: among others, Dr. William M'Gie, an ingenious young Physician, afterwards well known in London; Mr. William Cleghorn, afterwards Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh; Dr. John Blair, late Prebendary of Westminster; Dr. Wilkie, author of the Epigoniad; and Mr. John Home, author of the Tragedy of Douglas.

His studies at the University being at length finished, Dr. Robertson was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Dalkeith in 1741, and in 1743

he was presented to the living of Gladsmuir in East Lothian, by the Earl of Hopeton. The income was but inconsiderable (the whole emoluments not exceeding one hundred pounds a-year): but the preferment, such as it was, came to him at a time singularly fortunate; for, not long afterwards, his father and mother died within a few hours of each other, leaving a family of six daughters and a younger son, in such circumstances as required every aid which his slender funds enabled him to bestow.

Dr. Robertson's conduct in this trying situation, while it bore the most honourable testimony to the generosity of his dispositions, and to the warmth of his affections, was strongly marked with that manly decision in his plans, and that persevering steadiness in their execution, which were characteristical features of his mind. Undeterred by the magnitude of a charge, which must have appeared fatal to the prospects that had hitherto animated his studies; and resolved to sacrifice to a sacred duty all personal considerations, he invited his father's family to Gladsmuir, and continued to educate his sisters under his own roof, till they were settled respectably in the world. Nor did he think himself at liberty, till then, to complete an union which had been long the object of his wishes, and which may be justly numbered among the most fortunate incidents of his life. He remained single till 1751, when he married his cousin Miss Mary Nisbet, daughter of the Reverend Mr. Nisbet, one of the Ministers of Edinburgh.

While he was thus engaged in the discharge of those pious offices which had devolved upon him

by the sudden death of his parents, the Rebellion of 1745 broke out in Scotland, and afforded him an opportunity of evincing the sincerity of that zeal for the civil and religious liberties of his country, which he had imbibed with the first principles of his education; and which afterwards, at the distance of more than forty years, when he was called on to employ his eloquence in the national commemoration of the Revolution, seemed to rekindle the fires of his youth. His situation as a country Clergyman confined, indeed, his patriotic exertions within a narrow sphere; but even here, his conduct was guided by a mind superior to the scene in which he acted. On one occasion, (when the capital of Scotland was in danger of falling into the hands of the Rebels,) the state of public affairs appeared so critical, that he thought himself justified in laying aside, for a time, the pacific habits of his profession, and in quitting his parochial residence at Gladsmuir, to join the Volunteers of Edinburgh: and when, at last, it was determined that the city should be surrendered, he was one of the small band who repaired to Haddington, and offered their services to the commander of His Majesty's forces.

The duties of his sacred profession were, in the mean time, discharged with a punctuality, which secured to him the veneration and attachment of his parishioners; while the eloquence and taste that distinguished him as a Preacher, drew the attention of the neighbouring clergy, and prepared the way for that influence in the Church which he afterwards attained. A sermon which he preached in the year 1755 before the Society for Propagating Christian

Knowledge, and which was the earliest of all his publications, affords a sufficient proof of the eminence he might have attained in that species of composition, if his genius had not inclined him more strongly to other studies. This sermon, the only one he ever published, has long been ranked, in both parts of the island, among the best models of pulpit eloquence in our language. It has undergone five editions; and is well known, in some parts of the Continent, in the German translation of Mr. Ebeling.

A few years before this period, he made his first appearance in the debates of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The questions which were then agitated in that place have long ceased to be interesting; but they were highly important at the time, as they involved, not only the authority of the supreme court of ecclesiastical judicature, but the general tranquillity and good order of the country. The principles which Dr. Robertson held on these subjects, and which have, for many years past, guided the policy of the Church, will again fall under our review, before the conclusion of this narrative. At present it is sufficient to mention, that in the Assembly of 1751, when he first submitted them to public discussion, they were so contrary to the prevailing ideas, that, although he enforced them with extraordinary powers of argument and eloquence, and was most ably supported by the late Sir Gilbert Elliot and Mr. Andrew Pringle, (afterwards Lord Alemoor,) he was left in a very small minority; the house dividing, two hundred against eleven. The year following, by a steady persever-

clergy in the year 1757, by the publication of the Tragedy of Douglas, the author of which, Mr. John Home, was then Minister of Athelstonford. The extraordinary merits of this performance, which is now become to Scotchmen a subject of national pride, were not sufficient to atone for so bold a departure from the austerity expected in a Presbyterian divine; and the offence was not a little exasperated by the conduct of some of Mr. Home's brethren, who, partly from curiosity, and partly from a friendly wish to share in the censure bestowed on the author, were led to witness the first representation of the piece on the Edinburgh stage. In the whole course of the ecclesiastical proceedings connected with these incidents, Dr. Robertson distinguished himself by the ablest and most animated exertions in defence of his friends; and contributed greatly, by his persuasive eloquence, to the mildness of that sentence in which the prosecution at last terminated. His arguments on this occasion had, it may be presumed, the greater weight, that he had never himself entered within the walls of a playhouse; a remarkable proof, among numberless others which the history of his life affords, of that scrupulous circumspection in his private conduct, which, while it added so much to his usefulness as a clergyman, was essential to his influence as the leader of a party; and which so often enabled him to recommend successfully to others, the same candid and indulgent spirit that was congenial to his own mind.

The flattering notice these exertions drew to him from the public, and the rising influence he had already secured among his own order, would have

presented to a temper less active and persevering than his, many seductions to interrupt his studies. A considerable portion of his time appears, in fact, to have been devoted, during this period of his life, to the society of his friends; but, as far as his situation enabled him to command it, it was to a society which amply compensated for its encroachment on his studious leisure, by what it added to the culture and enlargement of his mind. The improvement which, in these respects, he derived from the conversation of Patrick Lord Elibank, he often recollected in his more advanced years with peculiar pleasure; and it affords no inconsiderable proof of the penetration of that lively and accomplished Nobleman, that, long before the voice of the public could have given any direction to his attachments, he had selected as the companion of his social hours, the Historian of Queen Mary, and the Author of the Tragedy of Douglas.

No seductions, however, could divert Dr. Robertson from the earliest object of his ambition; and in the midst of all his avocations, his studies had been advancing with a gradual progress. In the spring of the year which followed the debates about Mr. Home's Tragedy, he went to London to concert measures for the publication of his History of Scotland;—a work of which the plan is said to have been formed soon after his settlement at Gladsmuir. It was published on the first of February 1759, and was received by the world with such unbounded applause, that before the end of that month he was desired by his bookseller to prepare for a second edition.

From this moment the complexion of his fortune was changed. After a long struggle, in an obscure though a happy and hospitable retreat, with a narrow income and an increasing family, his prospects brightened at once. He saw independence and affluence within his reach; and flattered himself with the idea of giving a still bolder flight to his genius, when no longer depressed by those tender anxieties which so often fall to the lot of men whose pursuits and habits, while they heighten the endearments of domestic life, withdraw them from the paths of interest and ambition.

In venturing on a step, the success of which was to be so decisive, not only with respect to his fame, but to his future comfort, it is not surprising that he should have felt, in a more than common degree, "that anxiety and diffidence so natural to an author in delivering to the world his first performance."—"The time," (he observes in his preface,) "which I have employed in attempting to render it worthy of the public approbation, it is perhaps prudent to conceal, till it shall be known whether that approbation is ever to be bestowed."

Among the many congratulatory letters addressed to him on this occasion, a few have been accidentally preserved; and although the contents of some of them may not now appear very important, they still derive a certain degree of interest from the names and characters of the writers, and from the sympathetic share which a good-natured reader cannot fail tc take in Dr. Robertson's feelings, when he perceived the first dawning of his future fame.

In the extracts, however, which I mean at present

to produce from these letters, my principal object is to shew, how very strong an impression was made on the public mind by this work at the time of its first appearance. It was then regarded as an attempt towards a species of composition that had been cultivated with very little success in this island; and accordingly it entitles the Author, not merely to the praise which would now be due to an Historian of equal eminence, but to a high rank among those original and leading minds that form and guide the taste of a nation. In this view, a just estimate of its peculiar merits is more likely to be collected from the testimony of such as could compare it only with the productions of former writers, than from the opinions of critics familiarised in early life to all that has since been done to imitate or to rival its beauties.

A letter from Mr. Horace Walpole, to whom some specimens of the work had been communicated during the Author's visit to London, is the earliest testimony of this kind which I have found among his papers. It is dated January 18, 1759.

"I expect with impatience your book, which "you are so kind as to say you have ordered for me, "and for which I already give you many thanks: "the specimen I saw convinces me that I do not "thank you rashly. Good Historians are the most "scarce of all writers; and no wonder! a good style "is not very common; thorough information is still "more rare:—and if these meet, what a chance "that impartiality should be added to them! Your "style, Sir, I may venture to say, I saw was un-"commonly good; I have reason to think your in-

" formation so: and in the few times I had the
" pleasure of conversing with you, your good sense
" and candour made me conclude, that even on a
" subject which we are foolish enough to make
" *party*, you preserve your judgment unbiassed.
" I fear I shall not preserve mine so; the too kind
" acknowledgments that I frequently receive from
" gentlemen of your country, of the just praise that
" I paid to merit, will make me at least for the fu-
" ture not very unprejudiced. If the opinion of so
" trifling a writer as I am was of any consequence,
" it would then be worth Scotland's while to let the
" world know, that when my book was written, I
" had no reason to be partial to it:—but, Sir, your
" country will trust to the merit of its natives, not
" to foreign testimonials, for its reputation."

This letter was followed immediately by another from Dr. Robertson's Bookseller, Mr. Millar. It is dated 27th January 1759, a few days before the publication of the book, and conveys very flattering expressions of approbation from Dr. Warburton and Mr. Garrick, to both of whom copies had been privately sent at the Author's request:—expressions, which, though they cannot now add much to a reputation so solidly established, were gratifying at the time, and do honour to the candour and discernment of the writers.

" I have received," (says Dr. Warburton, in a note addressed to Mr. Millar,) " and read with
" great pleasure, the new History of Scotland, and
" will not wait for the judgment of the public, to
" pronounce it a very excellent work. From the
" Author's apparent love of civil and religious

"liberty, I suppose, that were it not for fear of "offence, (which every wise man in his situation "would fear to give,) he would have spoken with "much more freedom of the Hierarchical prin-"ciples of the infant Church of Scotland."

Mr. Garrick, besides writing to Millar, addressed himself directly to the Author. "Upon my word, "I was never more entertained in all my life; and "though I read it aloud to a friend and Mrs. Gar-"rick, I finished the three first books at two sittings. "I could not help writing to Millar, and congra-"tulating him upon this great acquisition to his "literary treasures.—I will assure you that there is "no *love lost* (as the saying is) between you and "Mrs. Garrick. She is resolved to see Scotland as "soon as my affairs will permit: nor do I find her "inclination in the least abated, though I read "your *Second Book* (in which her religion is so "exquisitely handled) with all the malevolent ex-"ertion I was master of—but it would not do; "she thinks you right even in that, and still re-"solves to see Scotland. In short, if she can give "up the Pope and his trumpery so readily to you, "what must her poor husband think? I shall keep "in England, I assure you; for you have convinced "me how difficult it is to contend with the Scots "in their own country."

These agreeable anticipations of the public voice were, in a few weeks, fully confirmed by a letter from Mr. Strahan, late printer to His Majesty, and a partner of Mr. Millar's in the property of the book. It is the oldest letter of Mr. Strahan's that I have observed among Dr. Robertson's papers. Many

were afterwards written in the course of a correspondence which continued twenty years, and which Dr. Robertson always mentioned with much pleasure, and with the strongest testimonies to the worth, the liberality, and the discernment of his friend. The concluding sentences express strongly the opinion which this very competent judge had previously formed of the probable reception of a History of Scotland.

—— "I most sincerely wish you joy of your "success, and have not the least doubt but it will "have all the good effects upon your future fortune "which you could possibly hope for or expect. "Much depended on the first performance; that "trial is now happily over, and henceforth you will "sail with a favourable gale. In truth, to acquire "such a flood of approbation from writing on a "subject in itself so unpopular in this country, "is neither a common nor a contemptible con-"quest*."

By the kindness of Mr. Strahan's son† I am enabled to quote the following passage from Dr. Robertson's answer to the foregoing letter:

"When we took leave, on finishing the printing "of my book, I had no expectation that it was so "soon to come through your hands a second time. "The rapidity of its success has not surprised any "man more than the Author of it. I do not affect "to think worse of it than is natural for him who "made it; and I never was much afraid of the "subject, which is interesting to the English as

* See Appendix to the Life, Note B.

† Andrew Strahan, Esq. M.P.

"well as Scots: but a much more moderate suc-
"cess was all I looked for. However, since it has
"so far outgone my hopes, I enjoy it. I have flat-
"tered nobody in order to obtain it, and I have not
"spared to speak truth of all factions and sects."

It would be tedious and useless to transcribe the complimentary passages which occur in various other letters from the Author's friends. Lord Royston, the late Sir Gilbert Elliot, Dr. Birch, Dr. Douglas, (now Bishop of Salisbury,) and Dr. John Blair, (late Prebendary of Westminster,) were among the first to perceive and to predict the extent of that reputation he was about to establish. A few passages from the letters addressed to him by Mr. Walpole and Mr. David Hume, as they enter more into detail concerning his merits as a writer, may, I think, be introduced into this memoir without impropriety.

"Having finished" (says Mr. Walpole) "the first
"volume, and made a little progress in the second,
"I cannot stay till I have finished the latter to tell
"you how exceedingly I admire the work. Your
"modesty will make you perhaps suppose these
"are words of compliment and of course; but as
"I can give you very good reasons for my appro-
"bation, you may believe that I no more flatter
"your performance, than I have read it superfi-
"cially, hastily, or carelessly.

"The style is most pure, proper, and equal; is
"very natural and easy, except now and then
"where, as I may justly call it, you are forced to
"*translate* from bad writers. You will agree with
"me, Sir, that an historian who writes from other

" authorities cannot possibly always have as flow-
" ing a style as an author whose narrative is dic-
" tated from his own knowledge. Your perspi-
" cuity is most beautiful, your relation always in-
" teresting, never languid; and you have very ex-
" traordinarily united two merits very difficult to
" be reconciled; I mean, that, though you have
" formed your history into pieces of information,
" each of which would make a separate memoir,
" yet the whole is hurried on into one uninterrupted
" story. I assure you I value myself on the first
" distinction, especially as Mr. Charles Townshend
" made the same remark. You have preserved the
" gravity of history without any formality, and you
" have at the same time avoided what I am now
" running into, antithesis and conceit. In short,
" Sir, I don't know where or what history is writ-
" ten with more excellencies:—and when I say
" this, you may be sure I do not forget your im-
" partiality.—But, Sir, I will not wound your bash-
" fulness with more encomiums; yet the public
" will force you to hear them. I never knew jus-
" tice so rapidly paid to a work of so deep and se-
" rious a kind; for deep it is, and it must be great
" sense that could penetrate so far into human na-
" ture, considering how little you have been con-
" versant with the world."

The long and uninterrupted friendship which subsisted between Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume is well known: and it is certainly a circumstance highly honourable to both, when we consider the wide diversity of their sentiments on the most important subjects, and the tendency which the coin-

cidence of their historical labours would naturally have had to excite rivalship and jealousy in less liberal minds. The passages I am now to quote from Mr. Hume's letters place in a most amiable light the characters both of the writer and of his correspondent.

"You have very good cause to be satisfied with "the success of your History, as far as it can be "judged of from a few weeks' publication. I have "not heard of one who does not praise it warmly: "and were I to enumerate all those whose suf-"frages I have either heard in its favour, or been "told of, I should fill my letter with a list of "names. Mallet told me that he was sure there "was no Englishman capable of composing such "a work. The town will have it that you was edu-"cated at Oxford, thinking it impossible for a "mere untravelled Scotchman to produce such "lauguage. In short, you may depend on the "success of your work, and that your name is "known very much to your advantage.

"I am diverting myself with the notion how much "you will profit by the applause of my enemies "in Scotland. Had you and I been such fools as "to have given way to jealousy, to have entertained "animosity and malignity against each other, and "to have rent all our acquaintance into parties, "what a noble amusement we should have exhi-"bited to the blockheads, which now they are "likely to be disappointed of! All the people "whose friendship or judgment either of us value, "are friends to both, and will be pleased with "the success of both, as we will be with that of

"each other. I declare to you I have not of a long "time had a more sensible pleasure than the good "reception of your History has given me within "this fortnight."

I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of transcribing a few paragraphs from another letter of Mr. Hume's, dated the 20th of the same month. "I am afraid that my letters will be tedious and "disagreeable to you by their uniformity. No-"thing but continued and unvaried accounts of the "same thing must in the end prove disgusting. "Yet since you will hear me speak on this subject, "I cannot help it, and must fatigue your ears as "much as ours are in this place by endless, and "repeated, and noisy praises of the History of Scot-"land. Dr. Douglas told me yesterday that he "had seen the Bishop of Norwich, who had just "bought the book from the high commendations "he heard of it from Mr. Legge. Mallet told me "that Lord Mansfield is at a loss whether he shall "most esteem the matter or the style. Elliot told "me, that being in company with George Gren-"ville, that Gentleman was speaking loud in the "same key. Our friend pretended ignorance; said "he knew the Author, and if he thought the book "good for any thing, would send for it and read it. "Send for it by all means, (said Mr. Grenville,) "you have not read a better book of a long time. "But, said Elliot, I suppose, although the matter "may be tolerable, as the Author was never on "this side the Tweed till he wrote it, it must be very barbarous in the expression. By no means, cried Mr. Grenville; had the Author lived all his

" life in London, and in the best company, he could
" not have expressed himself with greater elegance
" and purity. Lord Lyttelton seems to think that
" since the time of St. Paul there scarce has been
" a better writer than Dr. Robertson. Mr. Wal-
" pole triumphs in the success of his favourites the
" Scotch, &c. &c. &c."

* * * *

" The great success of your book, besides its real
" merit, is forwarded by its prudence, and by the
" deference paid to established opinions. It gains
" also by its being your first performance, and by
" its surprising the public, who are not upon their
" guard against it. By reason of these two cir-
" cumstances justice is more readily done to its
" merit, which, however, is really so great, that I
" believe there is scarce another instance of a first
" performance being so near perfection *."

Of this work, so flattering to the Author by its first success, no fewer than fourteen editions were published before his death; and he had the satisfaction to see its popularity increase to the last, notwithstanding the repeated assaults it had to encounter from various writers distinguished by their controversial acuteness, and seconded by all the prepossessions which are likely to influence the opinions of the majority of readers. The character of Mary has been delineated anew, and the tale of her misfortunes has again been told, with no common powers of expression and pathos, by an Historian more indulgent to her errors, and more undistinguishing in his praise: but, after all, it is in the History of

* See Appendix to the Life, Note C.

Dr. Robertson that every one still reads the transactions of her reign; and such is his skilful contrast of light and shade, aided by the irresistible charm of his narration, that the story of the beautiful and unfortunate Queen, as related by him, excites on the whole a deeper interest in her fortunes, and a more lively sympathy with her fate, than have been produced by all the attempts to canonize her memory, whether inspired by the sympathetic zeal of the Romish Church, or the enthusiasm of Scottish chivalry.

In perusing the letters addressed to Dr. Robertson, on the publication of this book, it is somewhat remarkable that I have not found one in which he is charged with the slightest unfairness towards the Queen; and that, on the contrary, almost all his correspondents accuse him of an undue prepossession in her favour. "I am afraid" (says Mr. Hume) "that you, as well as myself, have drawn Mary's "character with too great softenings. She was undoubtedly a violent woman at all times. You "will see in *Munden* proofs of the utmost rancour against her innocent, good-natured, dutiful son. She certainly disinherited him. What "think you of a conspiracy for kidnapping him, "and delivering him a prisoner to the King of "Spain, never to recover his liberty till he should "turn Catholic?——Tell Goodall, that if he can "but give me up Queen Mary, I hope to satisfy him "in every thing else; and he will have the pleasure "of seeing John Knox and the Reformers made "very ridiculous."

"It is plain," (says Mr. Walpole,) "that you

"wish to excuse Mary; and yet it is so plain that "you never violate truth in her favour, that I own "I think still worse of her than I did, since I read "your History."

Dr. Birch expresses himself much to the same purpose. "If the second volume of the State Pa-"pers of Lord Burleigh, published since Christ-"mas here, had appeared before your History had "been finished, it would have furnished you with "reasons for entertaining a less favourable opinion "of Mary Queen of Scots in one or two points, "than you seem at present possessed of."

Dr. John Blair too, in a letter dated from London, observes to Dr. Robertson, that "the only ge-"neral objection to his work was founded on his ten-"derness for Queen Mary."—"Lord Chesterfield, "(says he,) though he approves much of your His-"tory, told me, that he finds this to be a bias which "no Scotchman can get the better of."

I would not be understood, by quoting these passages, to give any opinion upon the subject to which they refer. It is a subject which I have never examined with attention, and which I must confess never excited my curiosity. Whatever judgment we form concerning the points in dispute, it leads to no general conclusion concerning human affairs, nor throws any new light on human character. Like any other historical question, in which the evidence has been industriously darkened by the arts of contending parties, the proofs of Mary's innocence or guilt may furnish an amusing and harmless employment to the leisure of the antiquary; but at this distance of time, it is difficult to conceive how pre-

judice or compassion should enter into the discussion, or should magnify it into an object of important and serious research. With respect to Dr. Robertson's narrative, in particular, it is sufficiently manifest, that whatever inaccuracies may be detected in it by the labours of succeeding inquirers, they can never furnish to the partizans of Mary any ground for impeaching his candour and good faith as a Writer. All his prepossessions (if he had any on this subject) must have been in favour of the Queen; for it was chiefly from the powerful interest excited by her story, that he could hope for popularity with the multitude; and it was only by the romantic pictures which her name presents to the fancy, that he could accommodate to the refinement of modern taste, the annals of a period, where perfidy, cruelty, and bigotry, appear in all their horrors; unembellished by those attractions which, in other states of society, they have so often assumed, and which, how much soever they may afflict the Moralist, yet facilitate and adorn the labours of the Historian.

Among the various circumstances that distinguish Dr. Robertson's genius and taste in the execution of this work, the address with which he interweaves the personal history of the Queen with the general events he records, is not the least remarkable. Indeed, without the aid of so interesting a character, the affairs of Scotland, during the period he treats of, could not have derived, even from his hand, a sufficient importance and dignity to engage the curiosity of the present age.

Another difficulty arising also from his subject he appears to me to have surmounted with exquisite

skill. In relating the transactions of a foreign country, however remote the period, and however antiquated the manners, it is easy for an Historian to avoid in his narrative, whatever might lessen the dignity of the actors, or lower the tone of his composition. The employment of expressions debased by common and trivial use is superseded by the necessity he is under to translate from one language into another; and the most insignificant of his details derive a charm from the novelty of the scenery. The writer too, who, in this island, employs his genius on the ancient history of England, addresses himself to readers already enamoured of the subject, and who listen with fond prepossessions to the recital of facts consecrated in their imaginations by the tale of the nursery. Even a description of old English manners, expressed in the obsolete dialect of former centuries, pleases by its simplicity and truth; and, while it presents to us those retrospects of the past on which the mind loves to dwell, has no tendency to awaken any mean or ludicrous images. But the influence of Scottish associations, so far as it is favourable to antiquity, is confined to Scotchmen alone, and furnishes no resources to the writer who aspires to a place among the English classics. Nay, such is the effect of that provincial situation to which Scotland is now reduced, that the transactions of former ages are apt to convey to ourselves exaggerated conceptions of barbarism, from the uncouth and degraded dialect in which they are recorded. To adapt the history of such a country to the present standard of British taste, it was necessary for the Author not only to excite an interest

for names which, to the majority of his readers, were formerly indifferent or unknown, but, what was still more difficult, to unite in his portraits the truth of nature with the softenings of art, and to reject whatever was unmeaning or offensive in the drapery, without effacing the characteristic garb of the times. In this task of "conquering" (as Livy expresses it) "the rudeness of antiquity by the art of writing," they alone are able to judge how far Dr. Robertson has succeeded, who have compared his work with the materials out of which it was formed.

Nor are these sacrifices to modern taste inconsistent with the fidelity of a history which records the transactions of former ages. On the contrary, they aid the judgment of the reader in forming a philosophical estimate of the condition and character of our ancestors, by counteracting that strong bias of the mind which confounds human nature and human life with the adventitious and ever-changing attire which they borrow from fashion. When we read the compositions of Buchanan in his native tongue;—abounding in idioms which are now appropriated to the most illiterate classes of the people, and accompanied with an orthography which suggests the coarsest forms of Scottish pronunciation;— how difficult do we find it to persuade ourselves, that we are conversing with a writer, whose Latin productions vie with the best models of antiquity! No fact can illustrate more strongly the necessity of correcting our common impressions concerning the ancient state of Scotland, by translating, not only the antiquated style of our forefathers into a more modern phraseology, but by translating

(if I may use the expression) their antiquated fashions into the corresponding fashions of our own times.

The peculiar circumstances of Scotland since the union of the crowns, are extremely apt to warp our ideas with respect to its previous History. The happy but slow effects produced by the union of the kingdoms do not extend beyond the memory of some of our contemporaries; and the traditions we have received concerning the condition of our immediate predecessors are apt to impress us with a belief, that at a still earlier period the gloom was proportionably more deep and universal. It requires an effort of reflection to conceive the effects which must have resulted from the residence of a court; and it is not, perhaps, easy for us to avoid under-rating the importance of that court while it existed. During the long and intimate intercourse with England, which preceded the disputed succession between Bruce and Baliol, it was certainly not without its share of that "barbaric pomp" which was then affected by the English Sovereigns; nor, under our later kings, connected as it was with the court of France, could it be altogether untinctured with those envied manners and habits, of which that country has been always regarded as the parent soil, and which do not seem to be the native growth of either part of our island. These circumstances, accordingly, (aided, perhaps, in no inconsiderable degree, by the field of ambition presented by an opulent Hierarchy,) appear to have operated powerfully on the national spirit and genius. The studies which were then valued in other parts of Europe, were cultivated by many of our countrymen with distinguished success.

Nor was their own vernacular tongue neglected by those whose rank or situation destined them for public affairs. At the æra, more particularly, when Dr. Robertson's History closes, it was so rapidly assuming a more regular form, that, excepting by a different system of orthography, and a few inconsiderable peculiarities of dialect, the epistolary style of some of our Scottish statesmen is hardly distinguishable from that of Queen Elizabeth's ministers.

This æra was followed by a long and melancholy period equally fatal to morals and to refinement; and which had scarcely arrived at its complete termination when Dr. Robertson appeared as an Author; aspiring at once to adorn the monuments of former times, when Scotland was yet a kingdom, and to animate his countrymen by his example, in reviving its literary honours.

Before quitting this first work of Dr. Robertson, I must not omit to mention (what forms the strongest testimony of its excellence) the severe trial it had to undergo in the public judgment, by appearing nearly at the same time with that volume of Mr. Hume's History, which involves an account of Scottish affairs during the reigns of Queen Mary and King James.—It is not my intention to attempt a parallel of these two eminent writers: nor, indeed, would the sincerity of their mutual attachment, and the lively recollection of it which still remains with many of their common friends, justify me in stating their respective merits in the way of opposition. Their peculiar excellencies, besides, were of a kind so different, that they might be justly said (in the language which a Roman Critic employs in speaking of Livy

and Sallust) to be *pares magis quam similes*. They divide between them the honour of having supplied an important blank in English literature, by enabling their countrymen to dispute the palm of historical writing with the other nations of Europe. Many have since followed their example, in attempting to bestow interest and ornament on different portions of British story; but the public voice sufficiently acquits me of any partiality, when I say that hitherto they have only been followed at a distance. In this respect, I may with confidence apply to them the panegyric which Quinctilian pronounces on the two great Historians of Ancient Greece;—and, perhaps, if I were inclined to characterise the beauties most prominent in each, I might, without much impropriety, avail myself of the contrast with which that panegyric concludes.

"Historiam multi scripsere, sed nemo dubitat, "duos longe cæteris præferendos, quorum diversa "virtus laudem pene est parem consecuta. Densus "et brevis et semper instans sibi Thucydides. Dul-"cis et candidus et fusus Herodotus. Ille conci-"tatis, hic remissis affectibus melior. Ille vi, hic "voluptate."

SECTION II.

Progress of Dr. ROBERTSON'S *Literary Plans and Undertakings.—History of the Reign of the Emperor* CHARLES V.

DURING the time that the History of Scotland was in the press, Dr. Robertson removed with his family from Gladsmuir to Edinburgh, in consequence of a presentation which he had received to one of the churches of that city. His preferments now multiplied rapidly. In 1759, he was appointed Chaplain of Stirling Castle; in 1761, one of His Majesty's Chaplains in ordinary for Scotland; and in 1762, he was chosen Principal of this University. Two years afterwards, the office of Historiographer for Scotland (with a salary of two hundred pounds a-year) was revived in his favour.

The revenue arising from these different appointments, though far exceeding what had ever been enjoyed before by any Presbyterian Clergyman in Scotland, did not satisfy the zeal of some of Dr. Robertson's admirers, who, mortified at the narrow field which this part of the island afforded to his ambition, wished to open to it the career of the English church. References to such a project occur in letters addressed to him about this time by Sir Gilbert Elliot, Mr. Hume, and Dr. John Blair. What answer he returned to them, I have not been able to learn; but, as the subject is mentioned once only by each of these gentlemen, it is probable that his disapprobation was expressed in

those decided terms which became the consistency and dignity of his character.

Dr. Robertson's own ambition was, in the mean time, directed to a different object. Soon after the publication of his Scottish History, we find him consulting his friends about the choice of another historical subject;—anxious to add new laurels to those he had already acquired. Dr. John Blair urged him strongly on this occasion to write a complete History of England; and mentioned to him, as an inducement, a conversation between Lord Chesterfield and Colonel Irwin, in which the former said, that he would not scruple, if Dr. Robertson would undertake such a work, to move, in the House of Peers, that he should have public encouragement to enable him to carry it into execution. But this proposal he was prevented from listening to, by his unwillingness to interfere with Mr. Hume; although it coincided with a favourite plan which he himself had formed at a very early period of his life. The two subjects which appear to have chiefly divided his choice were, the History of Greece, and that of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Between these he hesitated long, balancing their comparative advantages and disadvantages, and availing himself of all the lights that his correspondents could impart to him. Mr. Walpole and Mr. Hume took a more peculiar interest in his deliberations, and discussed the subject with him at length in various letters. I shall extract a few passages from these. The opinions of such writers upon such a question cannot fail to be generally interesting; and some of the hints they suggest may perhaps be useful to those who,

conscious of their own powers, are disposed to regret that the field of historical composition is exhausted.

The following passages are copied from a letter of Mr. Walpole, dated 4th March 1759.

"If I can throw in any additional temptation to "your disposition for writing, it is worth my while, "even at the hazard of my judgement and my "knowledge, both of which however are small "enough to make me tender of them. Before I read "your History, I should probably have been glad "to dictate to you, and (I will venture to say it— "it satirizes nobody but myself) should have "thought I did honour to an obscure Scotch Cler-"gyman, by directing his studies with my supe-"rior lights and abilities. How you have saved "me, Sir, from making a ridiculous figure, by "making so great an one yourself! But could I "suspect, that a man I believe much younger, and "whose dialect I scarce understood, and who "came to me with all the diffidence and modesty "of a very middling author, and who I was told "had passed his life in a small living near Edin-"burgh; could I suspect that he had not only "written what all the world now allows the best "modern history, but that he had written it in the "purest English, and with as much seeming know-"ledge of men and courts as if he had passed all "his life in important embassies? In short, Sir, I "have not power to make you, what you ought to "be, a Minister of State—but I will do all I can, "I will stimulate you to continue writing, and I "shall do it without presumption.

"I should like either of the subjects you mention, and I can figure one or two others that "would shine in your hands. In one light the "History of Greece seems preferable. You know "all the materials for it that can possibly be had. "It is concluded; it is clear of all objections; "for perhaps nobody but I should run wildly into "passionate fondness for liberty, if I was writing "about Greece. It even might, I think, be made "agreeably new, and *that* by comparing the extreme difference of their manners and ours, particularly in the article of finances, a system almost new in the world.

. . . . . .

"With regard to the History of Charles V., it "is a magnificent subject, and worthy of you. It "is more: it is fit for you; for you have shewn "that you can write on ticklish subjects with the "utmost discretion, and on subjects of religious "party with temper and impartiality. Besides, by "what little I have skimmed of History myself, I "have seen how many mistakes, how many prejudices, may easily be detected: and though much "has been written on that age, probably truth still "remains to be written of it. Yet I have an objection to this subject. Though Charles V. was "in a manner the Emperor of Europe, yet he was "a German or a Spaniard. Consider, Sir, by what "you must have found in writing the History of "Scotland, how difficult it would be for the most "penetrating genius of another country to give an "adequate idea of Scottish story. So much of all "transactions must take their rise from, and de-

" pend on, national laws, customs, and ideas, that
" I am persuaded a native would always discover
" great mistakes in a foreign writer. Greece, in-
" deed, is a foreign country; but no Greek is alive
" to disprove one.

" There are two other subjects which I have
" sometimes had a mind to treat myself; though
" my naming one of them will tell you why I did
" not. It was *the History of Learning*. Perhaps,
" indeed, it is a work which could not be executed
" unless intended by a young man from his first
" looking on a book with reflection. The other
" is the History of what I may in one light call the
" most remarkable period of the world, by con-
" taining a succession of five good Princes: I need
" not say, they were Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the
" two Antonines. Not to mention, that no part
" almost of the Roman History has been well
" written from the death of Domitian, this period
" would be the fairest pattern for use, if History
" can ever effect what she so much pretends to,
" doing good. I should be tempted to call it the
" *History of Humanity;* for though Trajan and
" Adrian had private vices that disgraced them as
" men, as Princes they approached to perfection.
" Marcus Aurelius arrived still nearer, perhaps with
" a little ostentation; yet vanity is an amiable ma-
" chine, if it operates to benevolence. Antoninus
" Pius seems to have been as good as human na-
" ture royalized can be. Adrian's persecution of the
" Christians would be objected, but then it is much
" controverted. I am no admirer of elective mo-
" narchies; and yet it is remarkable, that when

" Aurelius's diadem descended to his natural heir,
" not to the heir of his virtues, the line of benefi-
" cence was extinguished; for I am sorry to say
" that *hereditary* and *bad* are almost synonymous.
" —But I am sensible, Sir, that I am a bad ad-
" viser for you; the chastity, the purity, the good
" sense and regularity of your manner, that unity
" you mention, and of which you are the greatest
" master, should not be led astray by the licentious
" frankness, and, I hope, honest indignation of my
" way of thinking. I may be a fitter companion
" than a guide; and it is with most sincere zeal,
" that I offer myself to contribute any assistance
" in my power towards polishing your future work,
" whatever it shall be. You want little help; I can
" give little; and indeed I, who am taxed with in-
" correctnesses, should not assume airs of a correc-
" tor. My *Catalogue* I intended should have been
" exact enough in style: it has not been thought so
" by some: I tell you, that you may not trust me
" too much. Mr. Gray, a very perfect judge, has
" sometimes censured me for parliamentary phrases,
" familiar to me, as your Scotch law is to you. I
" might plead for my inaccuracies, that the greatest
" part of my book was written with people talking
" in the room; but that is no excuse to myself,
" who intended it for correct. However, it is easier
" to remark inaccuracies in the work of another
" than in one's own; and, since you command me,
" I will go again over your second volume, with an
" eye to the slips, a light in which I certainly did
" not intend my second examination of it."

In transcribing some of these paragraphs, as well as

in the other extracts I have borrowed from Mr. Walpole's letters, I must acknowledge, that I have been less influenced by my own private judgment, than by my deference for the partiality which the public has long entertained for this popular and fashionable Writer. Of the literary talents of an author on whom so much flattery has been lavished, it does not become me to speak disrespectfully; nor would I be understood to detract from his merits in his own peculiar and very limited walk of historical disquisition: but I should be wanting to myself, if I were not to avow, that in the foregoing quotation, my object was rather to gratify the curiosity of others, than to record a testimony which I consider as of any importance to Dr. Robertson's fame. The value of praise, besides, whatever be the abilities of him who bestows it, depends on the opinion we entertain of his candour and sincerity; qualities which it will be difficult to allow to Mr. Walpole, after comparing the various passages quoted in this memoir, with the sentiments he expresses on the same subject, in his posthumous publication.

For the length of the following extract from a letter of Mr. Hume's, no such apology is necessary. The matter is valuable in itself;—and the objections stated to the age of Charles V. as a subject for history, form the highest possible panegyric on the abilities of the Writer, by whom the difficulties which appeared so formidable to Mr. Hume, were so successfully surmounted.

"I have frequently thought, and talked with "our common friends upon the subject of your let- "ter. There always occurred to us several difficul-

" ties with regard to every subject we could pro-
" pose. The ancient Greek History has several
" recommendations, particularly the good authors
" from which it must be drawn: but this same cir-
" cumstance becomes an objection, when more nar-
" rowly considered: for what can you do in most
" places with these authors but transcribe and trans-
" late them? No letters or state-papers from which
" you could correct their errors, or authenticate
" their narration, or supply their defects. Besides,
" Rollin is so well wrote with respect to style, that
" with superficial people it passes for sufficient.
" There is one Dr. Leland, who has lately wrote
" the Life of Philip of Macedon, which is one of the
" best periods. The book, they tell me, is perfectly
" well wrote; yet it has had such small sale, and
" has so little excited the attention of the public,
" that the Author has reason to think his labour
" thrown away. I have not read the book; but by
" the size, I should judge it to be too particular. It
" is a pretty large quarto. I think a book of that size
" sufficient for the whole History of Greece till the
" death of Philip: and I doubt not but such a work
" would be successful, notwithstanding all these
" discouraging circumstances. The subject is no-
" ble, and Rollin is by no means equal to it.

" I own, I like still less your project of the Age
" of Charles the Fifth. That subject is disjointed;
" and your Hero, who is the sole connexion, is not
" very interesting. A competent knowledge at least
" is required of the state and constitution of the
" Empire; of the several kingdoms of Spain, of
" Italy, of the Low Countries; which it would be

" the work of half a life to acquire; and though
" some parts of the story may be entertaining, there
" would be many dry and barren; and the whole
" seems not to have any great charms.

" But I would not willingly start objections to
" these schemes, unless I had something to propose
" which would be plausible; and I shall mention
" to you an idea, which has sometimes pleased me,
" and which I had once entertained thoughts of at-
" tempting. You may observe that among mo-
" dern readers, Plutarch is in every translation the
" chief favourite of the Ancients. Numberless trans-
" lations and numberless editions have been made
" of him in all languages; and no translation has
" been so ill done as not to be successful. Though
" those who read the originals never put him in
" comparison either with Thucydides or Xenophon,
" he always attaches more the reader in the trans-
" lation; a proof that the idea and execution of his
" work is, in the main, happy. Now, I would have
" you think of writing modern lives, somewhat af-
" ter that manner: not to enter into a detail of the
" actions, but to mark the manners of the great
" Personages by domestic stories, by remarkable
" sayings, and by a general sketch of their lives
" and adventures. You see that in Plutarch the
" Life of Cæsar may be read in half an hour. Were
" you to write the Life of Henry the Fourth of France
" after that model, you might pillage all the pretty
" stories in Sully, and speak more of his mistresses
" than of his battles. In short, you might gather
" the flower of all Modern History, in this manner:
" The remarkable Popes, the Kings of Sweden, the

"great discoverers and conquerors of the New "World; even the eminent men of letters might "furnish you with matter, and the quick dispatch "of every different work would encourage you to "begin a new one. If one volume were success-"ful, you might compose another at your leisure, "and the field is inexhaustible. There are persons "whom you might meet with in the corners of His-"tory, so to speak, who would be a subject of en-"tertainment quite unexpected; and as long as you "live, you might give and receive amusement by "such a work. Even your son, if he had a talent "for history, would succeed to the subject, and his "son to him. I shall insist no farther on this idea; "because, if it strikes your fancy, you will easily "perceive all its advantages, and, by farther thought, "all its difficulties."

After much deliberation, Dr. Robertson resolved to undertake the History of Charles V.—a determination not less fortunate for the public than for his own fame; as it engaged him, unexpectedly perhaps, in a train of researches not confined to the period, or to the quarter of the globe that he had originally in view; but which, opening as he advanced new and more magnificent prospects, attracted his curiosity to two of the greatest and most interesting subjects of speculation in the History of Human Affairs;—the enterprizes of modern ambition in the Western World, and the traces of ancient wisdom and arts existing in the East.

The progress of the work, however, was interrupted for some time, about a year after its com-

mencement, by certain circumstances which induced him to listen more favourably than formerly to the entreaties of those friends who urged him to attempt a History of England. The motives that weighed with him on this occasion are fully explained in a correspondence still extant, in which there are various particulars tending to illustrate his character and his literary views.

From a letter of the late Lord Cathcart to Dr. Robertson, (dated 20th July 1761,) the revival of this project would appear to have originated in a manner not a little flattering to the vanity of an author.

. . . . . "Lord BUTE told me the King's "thoughts, as well as his own, with respect to your "History of Scotland, and a wish His Majesty had "expressed to see a History of England by your "pen. His Lordship assured me, every source of "information which Government can command "would be opened to you; and that, great, laborious, "and extensive as the work must be, he would take "care your encouragement should be proportioned "to it. He seemed to be aware of some objections "you once had, founded on the apprehension of "clashing or interfering with Mr. David Hume, "who is your friend: but as your performance and "his will be upon plans so different from each other, "and as *his* will, in point of time, have so much "the start of yours, these objections did not seem "to him such as, upon reflection, were likely to "continue to have much weight with you. . . . .

. . . . . "I must add, that though I did not "think it right to enquire particularly into Lord

" Bute's intentions before I knew a little of your
" mind, it appeared to me plain, that they were
" higher than any views which can open to you in
" Scotland, and which, I believe, he would think
" inconsistent with the attention the other subject
" would necessarily require." . . . . .

A paper which has been accidentally preserved among the letters addressed to Dr. Robertson by his friends, enables me to state his sentiments with respect to the foregoing proposal, in his own words. It is in Dr. Robertson's hand-writing, and is marked on the back as " An imperfect Sketch of his An-
" swer to Lord Cathcart's Letter of July 20th." The following extracts contain all those parts of it which are connected with the project of the English History.

. . . . . " After the first publication of the
" History of Scotland, and the favourable reception
" it met with, I had both very tempting offers from
" booksellers, and very confident assurances of pub-
" lic encouragement, if I would undertake the His-
" tory of England. But as Mr. Hume, with whom,
" notwithstanding the contrariety of our sentiments
" both in religion and politics, I live in great friend-
" ship, was at that time in the middle of the sub-
" ject, no consideration of interest or reputation
" would induce me to break in upon a field of which
" he had taken prior possession; and I determined
" that my interference with him should never be
" any obstruction to the sale or success of his work.
" Nor do I yet repent my having resisted so many
" solicitations to alter this resololution. But the
" case I now think is entirely changed. His His-

" tory will have been published several years before
" any work of mine on the same subject can appear;
" its first run will not be marred by any justling
" with me, and it will have taken that station in the
" literary system which belongs to it. This objec-
" tion, therefore, which I thought, and still think,
" so weighty, at that time, makes no impression
" on me at present, and I can now justify my un-
" dertaking the English History to myself, to the
" world, and to him. Besides, our manner of view-
" ing the same subject is so different or peculiar,
" that (as was the case in our last books) both may
" maintain their own rank, have their own parti-
" sans, and possess their own merit, without hurt-
" ing each other.

" I am sensible how extensive and laborious the
" undertaking is, and that I could not propose to
" execute it in the manner I could wish, and the
" public will expect, unless I shall be enabled to
" consecrate my whole time and industry to it.
" Though I am not weary of my profession, nor
" wish ever to throw off my ecclesiastical charac-
" ter, yet I have often wished to be free of the la-
" bour of daily preaching, and to have it in my pow-
" er to apply myself wholly to my studies. This the
" encouragement Your Lordship mentions will put
" in my power. But as my chief residence must
" still be in Scotland, where I would choose, both
" for my own sake and that of my family, to live
" and to compose; as a visit of three or four months
" now and then to England will be fully sufficient
" for consulting such manuscripts as have never
" been published; I should not wish to drop all con-

" nexion with the church of which I am a member,
" but still to hold some station in it, without being
" reduced entirely to the profession of an Author.

" Another circumstance must be mentioned to
" Your Lordship. As I have begun the History
" of Charles V., and have above one-third of it
" finished, I would not choose to lose what I have
" done. It will take at least two years to bring
" that work to perfection; and after that I shall
" begin the other, which was my first choice, long
" before Mr. Hume undertook it, though I was then
" too diffident of myself, and too idle to make any
" progress in the execution of it, farther than form-
" ing some general ideas as to the manner in
" which it should be prosecuted.

" As to the establishment to be made in my fa-
" vour, it would ill-become me to say any thing.
" Whether the present time be a proper one for
" settling the matter finally, I know not. I beg
" leave only to say, that however much I may wish
" to have a point fixed so much for my honour,
" and which will give such stability to all my fu-
" ture schemes, I am not impatient to enter into
" possession, before I can set to work with that par-
" ticular task for which my appointments are to be
" given."

In a letter addressed to Mr. Baron Mure, (dated Nov. 25. 1761,) Dr. Robertson has explained himself still more fully on some points touched on in the foregoing correspondence.

" I need say no more of my reasons for not un-
" dertaking the History of England immediately
" after the publication of my last book, or the cir-

" cumstances which induce me to think that I may
" now engage in it with propriety. These I have
" already explained, and I hope they are approved of.
" The only thing about which I have any difficulty
" is, the proposal of my residing in London with
" my family during the time I shall be employed
" in my intended work. If such a prospect had
" opened to me a dozen years ago, I should have
" reckoned it a very fortunate accident, and would
" have embraced it without hesitation. But, at
" my time of life, accustomed to the manners of
" my own country, and living with ease and credit
" and in good company here, I am unwilling to
" think of entering upon new habits, of form-
" ing new connections and friendships, and of min-
" gling with a society which, by what I have seen
" of it, I do not relish so much as that to which I
" am more familiar. This is the light in which, if
" I were still a single man, I must have viewed the
" matter. But in my present situation, with a wife
" and four children, my difficulties increase; and
" I must consider not only what would be agreeable
" to myself, but what may be of advantage to them.
" You know how greatly the expence of house-keep-
" ing at London exceeds that at Edinburgh, and
" how much the charge of educating children in-
" creases. You know with what ease women of a
" middling fortune mingle with good company in
" Edinburgh; how impossible that is in London;
" and even how great the expence is of their having
" any proper society at all. As I happen to have
" three daughters, these circumstances must occur
" to me, and have their own weight. Besides this,

" if it shall please God to spare my life a few years,
" I shall be able to leave my family, if it continue
" in Scotland, in a situation more independent than
" I could ever expect from any success or encou-
" ragement, if they shall settle in England.

. . . . . " Were I to carve out my own for-
" tune, I should wish to continue one of His Ma-
" jesty's Chaplains for Scotland, but to resign my
" charge as a Minister of Edinburgh, which en-
" grosses more of my time than one who is a stran-
" ger to the many minute duties of that office can
" well imagine. I would wish to apply my whole
" time to literary pursuits, which is at present par-
" celled out among innumerable occupations. In
" order to enable me to make this resignation, some
" appointment must be assigned me for life. What
" that should be, it neither becomes me, nor do I
" pretend to say. One thing, however, I wish with
" some earnestness, that the thing might be exe-
" cuted soon, both as it will give me great vigour in
" my studies to have my future fortune ascertained
" in such an honourable manner, and because, by
" allowing me to apply myself wholly to my present
" work, it will enable me to finish it in less time,
" and to begin so much sooner to my new task."

In what manner this plan, after being so far advanced, came to be finally abandoned, I have not been able to discover. The letters from which the foregoing extracts are taken, seem to have been preserved by mere accident; and after the date of the last, I find a blank till 1763 in Dr. Robertson's correspondence with Lord Cathcart. Some letters which passed between them about that time are now

in my possession. They relate chiefly to a scheme which was then in agitation, and which was soon after accomplished, of reviving in Dr. Robertson's favour the office of Historiographer for Scotland; but from various incidental passages in them, it appears clearly that he still looked forwards to a History of England as the next subject he was to undertake after that of Charles V. It is not impossible that the resignation of Lord Bute in 1764 may have contributed somewhat to alter his views, by imposing on him the necessity of a new negotiation through a different channel. The History of Charles V. besides, employed him much longer than he foresaw; partly in consequence of his avocations as Principal of the University, and partly of those arising from his connection with the church, in which, at that period, faction ran high. In the execution too of this work, he found that the transactions relating to America, which he had originally intended as the subject of an episode, were of such magnitude as to require a separate narrative: and when at last he had brought to a termination the long and various labours in which he was thus involved, his health was too much impaired, and his life too far advanced, to allow him to think of an undertaking so vast in itself, and which Mr. Hume had already executed with so splendid and so merited a reputation.

The delays which retarded the publication of the History of Charles V., together with the Author's established popularity as a writer, had raised the curiosity of the public to a high pitch before that work appeared: and perhaps there never was a book, unconnected with the circumstances of the times, that

was expected with more general impatience. It is unnecessary for me to say, that these expectations were not disappointed; nor would it be worth while to swell this memoir with a repetition of the *eulogiums* lavished on the Author in the literary journals of the day. The sentiment of his own personal friends, as expressed in the openness and confidence of a private epistolary correspondence, cannot fail to be more interesting; and I shall accordingly, on this, as on other occasions, avail myself of whatever passages in his papers appear to me to be useful, either for illustrating his literary progress, or his habits and connections in private life.

The paragraphs which immediately follow are part of a letter from Mr. Hume, without any date; but written, as it appears from the contents, while the History of Charles V. was still in the press. The levity of the style forms such a striking contrast to the character which this grave and philosophical Historian sustains in his publications, that I have sometimes hesitated about the propriety of subjecting to the criticisms of the world so careless an effusion of gaiety and affection. I trust, however, that to some it will not be wholly uninteresting, to enjoy a glimpse of the writer and his correspondent in the habits of private intercourse; and that to them the playful and good-natured irony of Mr. Hume will suggest not unpleasing pictures of the hours which they borrowed from business and study. Dr. Robertson used frequently to say, that in Mr. Hume's gaiety there was something which approached to *infantine;* and that he had found the same thing so often exemplified in the cir-

cle of his other friends, that he was almost disposed to consider it as characteristical of genius. It has certainly lent an amiable grace to some of the most favourite names in Ancient Story.

——— Atqui
Primores Populi arripuit, Populumque tributim—
Quin ubi se a vulgo et scenâ in secreta remôrant
Virtus Scipiadæ et mitis sapientia Læli;
Nugari cum illo et discincti ludere, donec
Decoqueretur olus, soliti.——

"I got yesterday from Strahan about thirty "sheets of your History to be sent over to Suard, "and last night and this morning have run them "over with great avidity. I could not deny myself "the satisfaction (which I hope also will not displease "you) of expressing presently my extreme appro-"bation of them. To say only they are very well "written, is by far too faint an expression, and much "inferior to the sentiments I feel: they are com-"posed with nobleness, with dignity, with ele-"gance, and with judgment, to which there are few "equals. They even excel, and, I think, in a sen-"sible degree, your History of Scotland. I pro-"pose to myself great pleasure in being the only "man in England, during some months, who will "be in the situation of doing you justice, after which "you may certainly expect that my voice will be "drowned in that of the public.

"You know that you and I have always been on "the footing of finding in each other's productions "*something to blame, and something to commend;* "and therefore you may perhaps expect also some

" seasoning of the former kind; but really neither my
" leisure nor inclination allowed me to make such re-
" marks, and I sincerely believe you have afforded
" me very small materials for them. However, such
" particulars as occur to my memory I shall men-
" tion. *Maltreat* is a Scotticism which occurs once.
" What the devil have you to do with that old-
" fashioned dangling word *wherewith?* I should
" as soon take back *whereupon, whereunto,* and
" *wherewithal.* I think the only tolerable, decent
" gentleman of the family is *wherein;* and I should
" not choose to be often seen in his company.
" But I know your affection for *wherewith* proceeds
" from your partiality to Dean Swift, whom I can
" often laugh with, whose style I can even approve,
" but surely can never admire. It has no harmony,
" no eloquence, no ornament; and not much cor-
" rectness, whatever the English may imagine.
" Were not their literature still in a somewhat bar-
" barous state, that Author's place would not be so
" high among their classics. But what a fancy is
" this you have taken of saying always *an hand, an*
" *heart, an head?* Have you *an ear?* Do you
" not know, that this (n) is added before vowels to
" prevent the Cacophony, and ought never to take
" place before (h) when that letter is sounded?
" It is never pronounced in these words: why
" should it be wrote? Thus, I should say, a *his-*
" *tory,* and an *historian;* and so would you too,
" if you had any sense. But you tell me, that
" Swift does otherwise. To be sure there is no
" reply to that; and we must swallow your *hath*
" too upon the same authority. I will see you

" d——d sooner.—But I will endeavour to keep
" my temper.

" I do not like this sentence in page 149. *This*
" *step was taken in consequence of the treaty*
" *Wolsey had concluded with the Emperor at*
" *Brussels, and which had hitherto been kept se-*
" *cret.* Si sic omnia dixisses, I should never
" have been plagued with hearing your praises so
" often sounded, and that fools preferred your style
" to mine. Certainly it had been better to have
" said, *which Wolsey, &c.* That relative ought
" very seldom to be omitted, and is here particu-
" larly requisite to preserve a symmetry between
" the two members of the sentence. You omit the
" relative too often, which is a colloquial barbarism,
" as Mr. Johnson calls it.

" Your periods are sometimes, though not often,
" too long. Suard will be embarrassed with them,
" as the modish French style runs into the other
" extreme." . . . . . .*

. . . . . .

Another letter of Mr. Hume's (dated 28th March 1769) relates to the same subject. " I find

* Considering the critical attention which Mr. Hume appears to have given to the *minutiæ* of style, it is somewhat surprising that he should himself fail so frequently both in purity and grammatical correctness. In these respects, his historical compositions will not bear a comparison with those of Dr. Robertson; although they abound, in every page, with what Mr. Gibbon calls " careless, inimitable beauties." In his familiar letters the inaccuracies are more numerous than might have been expected from one accustomed so much to write with a view to publication; nor are these negligencies *always* compensated by that happy lightness and ease which he seems to have been studious to attain.

" then that you are not contented without a parti-
" cular detail of your own praises, and that the very
" short but pithy letter I wrote you gives you no
" satisfaction. But what can I say more? The
" success has answered my expectations: and I,
" who converse with the Great, the Fair, and the
" Learned, have scarcely heard an opposite voice,
" or even whisper, to the general sentiment. Only
" I have heard that the Sanhedrim at Mrs. Mac-
" aulay's condemns you as little less a friend to
" Government and Monarchy than myself." . . . .

Mr. Walpole's congratulations on this occasion were no less warm than Mr. Hume's; but as they are expressed in more general terms, they do not supply materials equally interesting for a quotation. The only letter, besides, from Mr. Walpole relative to Charles V. that has come into my hands, was written before he had proceeded farther in the perusal than the first volume. What the impressions were which that part of the work had left upon his mind, may be judged of from the following paragraph.

" Give me leave, Sir, without flattery, to observe
" to yourself, what is very natural to say to others.
" You are almost the single, certainly the greatest
" instance, that sound parts and judgement can
" attain every perfection of a writer, though it be
" buried in the privacy of retired life and deep
" study. You have neither the prejudices of a
" recluse, nor want any of the taste of a man of
" the world. Nor is this polished ease confined to
" your works, which parts and imitation might
" possibly seize. In the few hours I passed with

" you last summer I was struck with your familiar
" acquaintance with men, and with every topic of
" conversation. Of your Scottish History I have
" often said, that it seemed to me to have been
" written by an able ambassador, who had seen
" much of affairs. I do not expect to find less of
" that penetration in your Charles. Why should
" I not say thus much to you? Why should the
" language of flattery forbid truth to speak its
" mind, merely because flattery has stolen truth's
" expressions? Why should you be deprived of the
" satisfaction of hearing the impression your merit
" has made? You have sense enough to be con-
" scious that you deserve what I have said; and
" though modesty will forbid you to subscribe to it,
" justice to me and to my character, which was
" never that of a flatterer, will oblige you silently
" to feel, that I can have no motive but that of
" paying homage to superior abilities."

Lord Lyttleton was another correspondent with whom Dr. Robertson had occasional communications. The first of his letters was an acknowledgement to him for a present of Charles V.; and is valuable on account of its coincidence with a letter of Mr. Hume's formerly quoted, in which he recommended to Dr. Robertson to write lives in the manner of Plutarch.

" I don't wonder that your sense of the public
" expectation gives you some apprehensions; but
" I know that the Historian of Mary Queen of
" Scots cannot fail to do justice to any great sub-
" ject; and no greater can be found in the records
" of mankind than this you have now chosen. Go

" on, dear Sir, to enrich the English language with
" more tracts of modern History. We have nothing
" good in that way, except what relates to the
" island of Great Britain. You have talents and
" youth enough to undertake the agreeable and
" useful task of giving us all the lives of the most
" illustrious Princes who have flourished since the
" age of Charles V. in every part of the world,
" and comparing them together, as Plutarch has
" done the most celebrated Heroes of Greece and
" Rome. This will diffuse your glory as a Writer
" farther than any other work. All nations will
" have an equal interest in it; and feel a gratitude
" to the stranger who takes pains to immortalize
" the virtues of those to whom he is only related
" by the general sympathy of sentiment and esteem.
" Plutarch was a Greek, which made him less im-
" partial between his countrymen and the Romans
" in weighing their comparative merit, than you
" would be in contrasting a Frenchman with a
" German, or an Italian with a Spaniard, or a
" Dutchman with a Swede. Select, therefore,
" those great men out of different countries, whose
" characters and actions may be best compared
" together, and present them to our view, without
" that disguise which the partiality of their coun-
" trymen or the malice of their enemies may have
" thrown upon them. If I can animate you to this,
" posterity will owe me a very great obligation."

I shall close these extracts with a short letter from Voltaire, dated 26th February 1770, from the *Chateau de Ferney*.

" Il y a quatre jours que j'ai reçu le beau présent

"dont vous m'avez honoré. Je le lis malgré les
" fluxions horribles qui me font craindre de perdre
" entièrement les yeux. Il me fait oublier tous mes
" maux. C'est à vous et à M. Hume qu'il appar-
" tient d'écrire l'Histoire. Vous êtes éloquent,
" savant, et impartial. Je me joins à l'Europe
" pour vous estimer."

While Dr. Robertson's fame was thus rapidly extending wherever the language in which he wrote was understood and cultivated, he had the singular good fortune to find in M. Suard, a writer fully capable of transfusing into a language still more universal, all the spirit and elegance of the original. It appears from a letter preserved among Dr. Robertson's papers, that M. Suard was selected for this undertaking, by the well-known baron d'Holbach. He has since made ample additions to his fame by his own productions; but, if I am not mistaken, it was his translation of Charles V. which first established his reputation, and procured him a seat in the French Academy*.

The high rank which this second publication of Dr. Robertson's has long maintained in the list of our English Classics, is sufficient to justify the warm encomiums I have already transcribed from the letters of his friends. To the general expressions of praise, however, which they have bestowed on it, I shall take the liberty of adding a few remarks on some of those specific excellencies by which it appears to me to be more peculiarly distinguished.

* See Appendix to the Life, Note D.

Among those excellencies, a most important one arises from the address displayed by the Author in surmounting a difficulty, which has embarrassed, more or less, all the Historians who have attempted to record the transactions of the two last centuries. In consequence of those relations which connect together the different countries of modern Europe as parts of one great system, a general knowledge of the contemporary situation of other nations becomes indispensable to those who would fully comprehend the political transactions of any one state at a particular period. In writing the history of a great nation, accordingly, it is necessary to connect with the narrative, occasional episodes with respect to such foreign affairs as had an influence on the policy of the government, or on the fortunes of the people. To accomplish this with success, by bestowing on these digressions perspicuity and interest, without entering into that minuteness of detail which might mislead the attention of the reader from the principal subject, is unquestionably one of the most difficult tasks of an historian; and in executing this task, Dr. Robertson's judgment and skill will not suffer by a comparison with those displayed by the most illustrious of his rivals.

In the work, however, now under our consideration, he has aimed at something more; for while he has recorded, with admirable distinctness, the transactions of a particular reign, (preserving his episodes in so just a subordination to his main design, that they seldom produce any inconvenient distraction of attention or of interest;) he has contrived, by happy transitions, to interweave so many

of the remarkable events which happened about the same time in other parts of Europe, as to render his History of Charles V. the most instructive introduction that has yet appeared to the general History of that age. The advantage of making the transactions of a particular nation, and still more the reign of a particular sovereign, a ground-work for such comprehensive views of human affairs, is sufficiently obvious. By carrying on a connected series of important events, and indicating their relations to the contemporary history of mankind, a *meridian* is traced (if I may use the expression) through the vast and crowded map of time; and a line of reference is exhibited to the mind, for marking the bearings of those subordinate occurrences, in the multiplicity of which its powers would have been lost.

In undertaking a work on a plan so philosophical in the design, but so difficult in the execution, no period, perhaps, in the history of the world, could have been more happily chosen than that which commences with the sixteenth century; in the course of which (as he himself observes) "the "several powers of Europe were formed into one "great political system, in which each took a sta- "tion, wherein it has since remained with less "alteration than could have been expected, after "the shocks occasioned by so many internal revo- "lutions and so many foreign wars."

Mr. Hume, in a letter which I had occasion already to quote, objects to him that "his Hero is "not very interesting;" and it must undoubtedly be acknowledged, that the characteristical qualities

of his mind were less those of an amiable man than of a great Prince. His character, however, on the whole, was singularly adapted to Dr. Robertson's purpose; not only as the ascendant it secured to him in the political world marks him out indisputably as the principal figure in that illustrious groupe which then appeared on the Theatre of Europe, but as it everywhere displays that deep and sagacious policy, which, by systematizing his counsels, and linking together the great events of his reign, inspires a constant interest, if not for the personal fortunes of the man, at least for the magnificent projects of the politician.—Nor is the character of Charles, however unamiable, without a certain species of attraction. The reader who is previously acquainted with the last scenes of his enterprising and brilliant life, while he follows him through the splendid career of his ambition, can scarcely avoid to indulge occasionally those moral sympathies which the contrast awakens; and to borrow from the solitude of the cloister some prophetic touches, to soften the sternness of the Warrior and the Statesman.

With a view to facilitate the study of this important portion of modern history, Dr. Robertson has employed a preliminary volume in tracing the progress of society in Europe, from the subversion of the Roman Empire to the æra at which his narrative commences. In this instance, as well as in the first book of his Scottish History, he has sanctioned by his example a remark of Father Paul, that an historical composition should be as complete as possible in itself; exhibiting a series of

events intelligible to every reader, without any reference to other sources of information. On the minuteness and accuracy of Dr. Robertson's researches concerning the state of Europe during the middle ages, I do not presume to offer an opinion. They certainly exhibit marks of very extensive and various reading, digested with the soundest judgement; and of which the results appear to be arranged in the most distinct and luminous order. At the time when he wrote, such an arrangement of materials was the grand *desideratum*, and by far the most arduous task; nor will the merit of having first brought into form a mass of information so little accessible till then to ordinary readers, be ever affected by the controversies that may arise concerning the justness of particular conclusions. If, in some of these, he has been censured as hasty by later writers, it must be remembered how much their labours were facilitated by what he did to open a field for their minuter diligence; and that, by the scrupulous exactness with which he refers to his authorities, he has himself furnished the means of correcting his errors. One thing is certain, (and it affords no inconsiderable testimony both to the felicity of his choice in the various historical subjects he undertook, and to the extent of his researches in the investigation of facts,) that the most acute and able of all his *adversaries was guided by Dr. Robertson's example in almost all his literary undertakings; and that his curiosity has seldom led him into any path, where the genius and industry of his predecessor had not previously cleared the way.

* Dr. Gilbert Stuart.

In no part of Dr. Robertson's works has he displayed more remarkably than in this introductory volume, his patience in research; his penetration and good sense in selecting his information; or that comprehension of mind, which, without being misled by system, can combine, with distinctness and taste, the dry and scattered details of ancient monuments. In truth, this Dissertation, under the unassuming title of an Introduction to the History of Charles V., may be regarded as an introduction to the History of Modern Europe. It is invaluable, in this respect, to the historical student; and it suggests, in every page, matter of speculation to the politician and the philosopher.

It will not, I hope, be imputed to me as a blameable instance of national vanity, if I conclude this Section with remarking the rapid progress that has been made in our own country during the last fifty years, in tracing the origin and progress of the present establishments in Europe. Montesquieu undoubtedly led the way; but much has been done since the publication of his works, by authors whose names are enrolled among the members of this society. "On this interesting subject" (says Mr. Gibbon) "a strong ray of philosophic light has broke "from Scotland in our own times; and it is with "private as well as public regard that I repeat the "names of Hume, Robertson, and Adam Smith*." It was, indeed, a subject worthy of their genius; for, in the whole history of human affairs, no spectacle occurs so wonderful in itself, or so momentous in its effects, as the growth of that system which

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chap. lxi.

took its rise from the conquests of the Barbarians. In consequence of these, the western parts of Europe were overspread with a thick night of superstition and ignorance, which lasted nearly a thousand years; yet this event, which had at first so unpromising an aspect, laid the foundation of a state of society far more favourable to the general and permanent happiness of the human race than any which the world had hitherto seen;—a state of society which required many ages to bring it to that condition which it has now attained, and which will probably require ages more to bestow on it all the perfection of which it seems to be gradually susceptible. By dividing Europe into a number of large monarchies, agreeing with each other in their fundamental institutions, but differing in the nature both of their moral and physical advantages; and possessing, at the same time, such measures of relative force as to render them objects of mutual respect; it multiplied the chances of human improvement;—secured a mutual communication of lights among vast political communities, all of them fitted to contribute their respective shares to the common stock of knowledge and refinement;—and sheltered science and civilization, till they had time to strike their roots so deep, and to scatter their seeds so wide, that their final progress over the whole globe can now be checked only by some calamity fatal to the species.

SECTION III.

Continuation of the same Subject.—History of America.

AFTER an interval of eight years from the publication of Charles the Fifth, Dr. Robertson produced the History of America;—a work, which, by the variety of research and of speculation that it exhibits, enables us to form a sufficient idea of the manner in which he had employed the intervening period.

In undertaking this task, the Author's original intention was only to complete his account of the great events connected with the reign of Charles V.; but perceiving, as he advanced, that a History of America, confined solely to the operations and concerns of the Spaniards, would not be likely to excite a very general interest, he resolved to include in his plan the transactions of all the European nations in the New World. The origin and progress of the British empire there, he destined for the subject of one entire volume; but afterwards abandoned, or rather suspended the execution of this part of his design, for reasons mentioned in his Preface.

In the view which I have hitherto given of Dr. Robertson's literary pursuits, I have endeavoured not only to glean all the scanty information which his papers supply, concerning the progress of his studies, but to collect whatever memorials they afford, of his intercourse with those, to whom he appears to have been more peculiarly attached by sen-

timents of esteem or of friendship. In following this plan, while I have attempted (in conformity to the precept of an eloquent Critic *) to add to the interest of my narrative "by surrounding the sub-"ject of it with his Contemporaries," I have aimed also to select such passages from the letters of his correspondents, as were at once calculated to illustrate the characters of the writers, and to reflect some light on that of the person to whom they are addressed. It appeared to me to be possible to convey in this manner a livelier and juster idea of the more delicate features of their minds, than by any description however circumstantial; and at the same time to avoid, by a proper discrimination in the selection of materials, those frivolous or degrading details, which in the present times are so frequently presented to the public by the indiscretion of editors. The epistolary fragments, accordingly, interwoven with my own composition have all a reference to the peculiar object of this Memoir; and I cannot help indulging a hope, that they will amply compensate, by the value they possess as authentic relics of the individuals whose friendships they record, for the trespasses they have occasioned against that unity of style which the rules of criticism enjoin.

In the farther prosecution of this subject, I shall adhere to the same general plan; without, however, affecting that minuteness of illustration which I was anxious to bestow on the first steps of Dr. Robertson's literary progress. The circle of his acquaintance, besides, was now so extended, and the congratulations which his works drew to him so multi-

* Abbé Maury.

plied, that my choice must necessarily be limited to the letters of those whose names render their judgements of men and books objects of public curiosity. The Society will regret with me, that among these correspondents the name of Mr. Hume is not to be found. He died in the year 1776; the year immediately preceding that in which the History of America was published.*

Mr. Gibbon made his appearance as an Historian a few months before Mr. Hume's death, and began a correspondence with Dr. Robertson the year following. A letter, dated from Paris, 14th July 1777, in acknowledgment of a present of Dr. Robertson's book, appears plainly from the contents to have been one of the first that passed between them.

"When I ventured to assume the character of "Historian, the first, the most natural, but at the "same time the most ambitious wish which I en- "tertained was to deserve the approbation of Dr. "Robertson and Mr. Hume, two names which "friendship united, and which posterity will never "separate. I shall not therefore attempt to dis- "semble, though I cannot easily express, the ho- "nest pleasure which I received from your obliging "letter, as well as from the intelligence of your most "valuable present. The satisfaction which I should "otherwise have enjoyed in common with the pub- "lic, will now be heightened by a sentiment of a "more personal and flattering nature; and I shall "often whisper to myself that I have in some de- "gree obtained the esteem of the Writer whom I "admire.

* See Appendix to the Life, Note E.

"A short excursion which I have made to this "place during the summer months, has occasioned "some delay in my receiving your letter, and will "prevent me from possessing, till my return, the "copy of your History, which you so politely desired "Mr. Strahan to send me. But I have already "gratified the eagerness of my curiosity and impa-"tience; and though I was obliged to return the "book much sooner than I could have wished, I "have seen enough to convince me that the pre-"sent publication will support, and, if possible, "extend the fame of the Author; that the mate-"rials are collected with care, and arranged with "skill; that the progress of discovery is dis-"played with learning and perspicuity; that the "dangers, the achievements, and the views of the "Spanish Adventurers, are related with a temperate "spirit; and that the most original, perhaps the "most curious portion of human manners, is at "length rescued from the hands of sophists and "declaimers. Lord Stormont, and the few in this "capital who have had an opportunity of perusing "the History of America, unanimously concur "in the same sentiments: your work is already "become a favourite subject of conversation, and "M. Suard is repeatedly pressed, in my hear-"ing, to fix the time when his translation will "appear.*

* The letter from which the foregoing passage is extracted has been already published by Lord Sheffield in the posthumous works of Mr. Gibbon. As the copy found among Dr. Robertson's papers corresponds *verbatim* with that which Mr. Gibbon appears to have retained in his own possession, it affords a proof of the care which he bestowed on his epistolary compositions.

In most of the other letters received by Dr. Robertson on this occasion, I have not remarked any thing very interesting. Mr. Walpole is liberal, as formerly, in his praise, but does not enter so much into particular criticisms; and as for his other correspondents, (among whom were various names of the first distinction in the kingdom,) the greater part of them were probably restrained, by motives of delicacy, from offering any thing more than general expressions of admiration, to a Writer whose fame was now so fully established. A letter from William Lord Mansfield, though it bears no marks of the superior mind of that eminent man, is valuable at least as a testimony of his respect for Dr. Robertson: nor will it, perhaps, when contrasted with the splendor of his professional exertions, be altogether unacceptable to those who have a pleasure in studying the varieties and the limits of human genius.

"I delayed returning you my warmest acknow-
"ledgments for your most valuable present, till I
"could say that I have enjoyed it. Since my return
"from the circuit I have read it with infinite plea-
"sure. It is inferior to none of your works, which
"is saying a great deal. No man will now doubt
"but that you have done judiciously in making this
"an entire separate work, and detaching it from
"the general History. Your account of the science
"of Navigation and Naval discovery is admirable,
"and equal to any Historical Map of the kind. If I
"knew a pen equal to it, I would advise the con-
"tinuation down to the next arrival of Captain
"Cook. Nothing could be more entertaining, or
"more instructive. It is curious that all great dis-

" coveries are made, as it were by accident, when
" men are in search of something else. I learn
" from you that Columbus did not, as a philoso-
" pher, demonstrate to himself that there must be
" such a portion of the earth as America is, but
" that meaning to go to the East Indies, he stum-
" bled on the West. It is a more interesting spe-
" culation to consider how little political wisdom
" had to do, and how much has arisen from chance,
" in the peopling, government, laws, and consti-
" tution of the New World. You shew it strongly
" in the revolutions and settlements of Spanish
" America. I hope the time will come for fulfil-
" ling the engagement you allude to in the begin-
" ning of the preface. You will then shew how
" little political wisdom had to do in forming the
" original settlements of English America. Go-
" vernment left private adventurers to do as they
" pleased, and certainly did not see in any degree
" the consequence of the object."

One letter containing the judgment of an Author who is supposed to have employed his own abilities in a very masterly sketch on the same subject, I shall publish entire. It is long for a quotation; but I will not mutilate what comes from the pen of Mr. Burke.

" I am perfectly sensible of the very flattering di-
" stinction I have received in your thinking me
" worthy of so noble a present as that of your His-
" tory of America. I have, however, suffered my
" gratitude to lie under some suspicion, by delaying
" my acknowledgment of so great a favour. But
" my delay was only to render my obligation to you

"more complete, and my thanks, if possible, more
"merited. The close of the session brought a
"great deal of very troublesome, though not im-
"portant business on me at once. I could not go
"through your work at one breath at that time,
"though I have done it since. I am now enabled
"to thank you, not only for the honour you have
"done me, but for the great satisfaction, and the
"infinite variety and compass of instruction I have
"received from your incomparable work. Every
"thing has been done which was so naturally to be
"expected from the Author of the History of Scot-
"land, and of the Age of Charles the Fifth. I be-
"lieve few books have done more than this, towards
"clearing up dark points, correcting errors, and
"removing prejudices. You have too the rare se-
"cret of rekindling an interest on subjects that had
"so often been treated, and in which every thing
"which could feed a vital flame appeared to have
"been consumed. I am sure I read many parts
"of your History with that fresh concern and anxi-
"ety which attend those who are not previously
"apprised of the event. You have, besides, thrown
"quite a new light on the present state of the
"Spanish provinces, and furnished both materials
"and hints for a rational theory of what may be
"expected from them in future.

"The part which I read with the greatest plea-
"sure is, the discussion on the manners and cha-
"racter of the inhabitants of that New World. I
"have always thought with you, that we possess at
"this time very great advantages towards the know-
"ledge of human nature. We need no longer go

" to History to trace it in all its stages and peri-
" ods. History, from its comparative youth, is
" but a poor instructor. When the Egyptians call-
" ed the Greeks Children in Antiquities, we may
" well call them Children; and so we may call all
" those nations which were able to trace the pro-
" gress of society only within their own limits. But
" now the great Map of Mankind is unrolled at
" once, and there is no state or gradation of bar-
" barism, and no mode of refinement, which we
" have not at the same moment under our view:
" the very different civility of Europe and of China;
" the barbarism of Persia and of Abyssinia; the
" erratick manners of Tartary and of Arabia; the
" savage state of North America and of New Zea-
" land. Indeed you have made a noble use of the
" advantages you have had. You have employed
" philosophy to judge on manners, and from man-
" ners you have drawn new resources for philoso-
" phy. I only think that in one or two points you
" have hardly done justice to the savage character.

" There remains before you a great field. *Peri-*
" *culosæ plenum opus aleæ Tractas, et incedis*
" *per ignes Suppositos cineri doloso.* When even
" those ashes will be spread over the present fire,
" God knows, I am heartily sorry that we are now
" supplying you with that kind of dignity and con-
" cern, which is purchased to History at the ex-
" pence of mankind. I had rather by far that Dr.
" Robertson's pen were only employed in delinea-
" ting the humble scenes of political œconomy,
" than the great events of a civil war. However,
" if our statesmen had read the book of human na-

"ture instead of the Journals of the House of Com-
"mons, and History instead of Acts of Parliament,
"we should not by the latter have furnished out so
"ample a Page for the former. For my part, I
"have not been, nor am I very forward in my spe-
"culations on this subject. All that I have ven-
"tured to make have hitherto proved fallacious. I
"confess, I thought the Colonies left to themselves
"could not have made any thing like the present
"resistance to the whole power of this country and
"its allies. I did not think it could have been
"done without the declared interference of the
"House of Bourbon. But I looked on it as very
"probable that France and Spain would before this
"time have taken a decided part. In both these
"conjectures I have judged amiss.—You will smile
"when I send you a trifling temporary production,
"made for the occasion of a day, and to perish with
"it, in return for your immortal work. But our
"exchange resembles the politics of the times.
"You send out solid wealth, the accumulation of
"ages, and in return you get a few flying leaves of
"poor American paper. However, you have the
"mercantile comfort of finding the balance of trade
"infinitely in your favour; and I console myself
"with the snug consideration of uninformed natu-
"ral acuteness, that I have my warehouse full of
"goods at another's expence.

"Adieu, Sir, continue to instruct the world; and
"whilst we carry on a poor unequal conflict with
"the passions and prejudices of our day, perhaps
"with no better weapons than other passions and

"prejudices of our own, convey wisdom at our ex-
"pence to future generations."

After these testimonies to the excellence of the American History, joined to twenty years' possession of the public favour, it may perhaps be thought presumption in me to interpose my own judgment with respect to its peculiar merits. I cannot help, however, remarking (what appears still more characteristical of this than of any of Dr. Robertson's other works) the comprehensive survey which he has taken of his vast and various subject, and the skilful arrangement by which he has bestowed connection and symmetry on a mass of materials so shapeless and disjointed. The penetration and sagacity displayed in his delineation of savage manners, and the unbiassed good sense with which he has contrasted that state of society with civilized life, (a speculation in the prosecution of which so many of his predecessors had lost themselves, in vague declamation or in paradoxical refinement,) have been much and deservedly admired. His industry also, and accuracy in collecting information with respect to the Spanish system of colonial policy, have received warm praise from his friends and from the public. But what perhaps does no less honour to the powers of his mind than any of these particulars is, the ability and address with which he has treated some topics that did not fall within the ordinary sphere of his studies; more especially those which border on the province of the natural historian. In the consideration of these, although we may perhaps, in one or two instances, have room to

regret that he had not been still more completely prepared for the undertaking by previous habits of scientific disquisition, we uniformly find him interesting and instructive in the information he conveys; and happy, beyond most English Writers, in the descriptive powers of his style. The species of description too in which he excels is peculiarly adapted to his subject; distinguished, not by those picturesque touches which vie with the effects of the pencil in presenting local scenery to the mind, but by an expression, to which language alone is equal, of the grand features of an unsubdued world. In these passages he discovers talents as a Writer, different from any thing that appears in his other publications; a compass and richness of diction the more surprising, that the objects described were so little familiarized to his thoughts, and, in more than one instance, rivalling the majestic eloquence which destined Buffon to be the Historian of Nature.

After all, however, the principal charm of this, as well as of his other Histories, arises from the graphical effect of his narrative, wherever his subject affords him materials for an interesting picture. What force and beauty of painting in his circumstantial details of the Voyage of Columbus; of the first aspect of the New Continent; and of the interviews of the Natives with the Spanish adventurers! With what animation and fire does he follow the steps of Cortes through the varying fortunes of his vast and hazardous career; yielding, it must be owned, somewhat too much to the influence of the passions which his hero felt; but bestowing, at the same time, the warm tribute of admiration and sympathy on the

virtues and fate of those whom he subdued! The arts, the institutions, and the manners of Europe, and of America; but, above all, the splendid characters of Cortes and of Guatimozin, enable him, in this part of his work, to add to its other attractions that of the finest contrasts which occur in History.

On these and similar occasions, if I may be allowed to judge from what I experience in myself, he seizes more completely than any other modern Historian the attention of his reader, and transports him into the midst of the transactions which he records. His own imagination was warm and vigorous; and although in the conduct of life it gave no tincture of enthusiasm to his temper, yet, in the solitude of the closet, it attached him peculiarly to those passages of history which approach to the romantic. Hence many of the characteristical beauties of his writings; and hence too, perhaps, some of their imperfections. A cold and phlegmatic historian, who surveys human affairs like the inhabitant of a different planet, if his narrative should sometimes languish for want of interest, will at least avoid those prepossessions into which the Writer must occasionally be betrayed, who, mingling with a sympathetic ardour among the illustrious personages whose story he contemplates, is liable, while he kindles with their generous emotions, to be infected by the contagion of their prejudices and passions.

These effects, resulting naturally from a warm imagination, were heightened in Dr. Robertson by the vigour of an active and aspiring mind. It

was not from the indifference produced by indolence or abstraction that he withdrew from the business of life to philosophy and letters. He was formed for action no less than speculation; and had fortune opened to him a field equal to his talents, he would have preferred, without hesitation, (if I do not greatly mistake his character,) the pursuits of the former to those of the latter. His studies were all directed to the great scenes of political exertion; and it was only because he wanted an opportunity to sustain a part in them himself, that he submitted to be an Historian of the actions of others. In all his writings, the influence of the circumstances which I have now suggested may, I think, be traced; but in none of them is it so strongly marked as in the History of America. There he writes with the interest of one who had been himself an actor on the scene; giving an ideal range to his ambition among the astonishing events which he describes.

Perhaps, indeed, it must be owned, on the other hand, that if the excellencies of this performance are on a scale commensurate to the magnitude of the subject, it is in some respects more open to censure than any of his other productions. A partiality for the charms of eloquence and the originality of system displayed in the writings of Buffon and De Paw,—a partiality natural to the enthusiasm of a congenial mind,—has unquestionably produced a facility in the admission of many of their assertions which are now classed with the prejudices of former times. After allowing, however, to this charge all the weight it possesses, it ought to be remembered, in justice to Dr. Robertson, what important addi-

tions have been made, since the time he wrote, to our knowledge both of America and of its aboriginal inhabitants; and that it is not from our present stock of information, but from what was then current in Europe, that an estimate can fairly be formed of the extent and accuracy of his researches. When he hazarded himself, like Columbus, in traversing an unknown ocean, and in surveying a New World, much, it might be expected, would be left to reward the industry of future adventurers.—The disposition he has shewn to palliate or to veil the enormities of the Spaniards in their American conquests, is a blemish of a deeper and more serious nature, to the impression of which I must content myself with opposing those warm and enlightened sentiments of humanity which in general animate his writings. A late candid and well-informed Author, accordingly, after asserting that the conquest of the New World was effected (on a low estimate) by the murdering of ten millions of the species, and that the accounts of this carnage are authenticated beyond the possibility of dispute, suggests an apology for Dr. Robertson, by remarking, "That this "is one of those melancholy passages in the his- "tory of human nature, where a benevolent mind, "shrinking from the contemplation of facts, wishes "to resist conviction, and to relieve itself by incre- "dulity."*

The Spanish nation were not insensible of what they owed to Dr. Robertson for "the temperate "spirit" (as Mr. Gibbon expresses it) with which he had related this portion of their story. "On

* Bryan Edwards.—History of the West Indies.

" the 8th of August 1777, he was unanimously " elected a member of the Royal Academy of His- " tory at Madrid; in testimony of their approba- " tion of the industry and care with which he has " applied to the study of Spanish History, and as " a recompence for his merit in having contributed " so much to illustrate and spread the knowledge " of it in foreign countries." The Academy, at the same time, appointed one of its members to translate the History of America into Spanish; and it is believed that considerable progress had been made in the translation, when the Spanish Government, judging it inexpedient that a work should be made public, in which the nature of the trade with America, and the system of Colonial Administration, were so fully explained, interposed its authority to stop the undertaking.

As the volumes which have been now under our review did not complete Dr. Robertson's original design, he announced in the preface his intention to resume the subject at a future period; suspending, in the mean time, the execution of that part of his plan which related to the British settlements, " on account of the *ferment* which then agitated " our North American Colonies." A fragment of this intended work, which has been published since his death, while it illustrates the persevering ardour of his mind, must excite a lively regret in all who read it, that a History so peculiarly calculated by its subject to co-extend his fame with the future progress of our language in the regions beyond the Atlantic, had not been added to the other monuments of his genius.

The caution which Dr. Robertson observed in his expressions concerning the American war, suggests some doubts about his sentiments on that subject. In his letters to Mr. Strahan he writes with greater freedom, and sometimes states, without reserve, his opinions of men and measures.

One or two of these passages (which I transcribe without any comment) appear to me to be objects of curiosity, as they illustrate Dr. Robertson's political views; and I flatter myself they will now be read without offence, when the factions to which they allude are almost effaced from our recollection by the more interesting events of a later period. I need scarcely premise, that in quoting Dr. Robertson's opinions I would by no means be understood to subscribe to them as my own.

In a letter dated October 6, 1775, he writes thus: "I agree with you in sentiment about the "affairs of America. Incapacity, or want of in-"formation, has led the people employed there to "deceive ministry. Trusting to them, they have "been trifling for two years, when they should "have been serious, until they have rendered a "very simple piece of business extremely per-"plexed. They have permitted colonies disjoined "by nature and situation to consolidate into a re-"gular systematical confederacy; and when a few "regiments stationed in each capital would have "rendered it impossible for them to take arms, "they have suffered them quietly to levy and train "forces, as if they had not known and seen against "whom they were prepared. But now we are "fairly committed, and I do think it fortunate that

" the violence of the Americans has brought mat-
" ters to a crisis too soon for themselves. From
" the beginning of the contest I have always as-
" serted that independence was their object. The
" distinction between *taxation* and *regulation* is
" mere folly. There is not an argument against
" our right of taxing, that does not conclude with
" tenfold force against our power of regulating
" their trade. They may profess or disclaim what
" they please, and hold the language that best suits
" their purpose; but, if they have any meaning, it
" must be that they should be free states, con-
" nected with us by blood, by habit, and by religion,
" but at liberty to buy and sell and trade where and
" with whom they please. This they will one day
" attain, but not just now, if there be any degree
" of political wisdom or vigour remaining. At the
" same time one cannot but regret that prosperous
" growing states should be checked in their career.
" As a lover of mankind I bewail it; but as a sub-
" ject of Great Britain, I must wish that their de-
" pendence on it should continue. If the wisdom
" of Government can terminate the contest with
" honour instantly, that would be the most desir-
" able issue. This, however, I take to be *now* im-
" possible; and I will venture to foretel, that if
" our leaders do not at once exert the power of the
" British Empire in its full force, the struggle will
" be long, dubious, and disgraceful. We are past
" the hour of lenitives and half exertions. If the
" contest be protracted, the smallest interruption
" of the tranquillity that now reigns in Europe, or
" even the appearance of it, may be fatal.

"It is lucky that my American History was not "finished before this event. How many plausible "theories that I should have been entitled to form, "are contradicted by what has now happened!"

To this extract I shall only add a few sentences from a letter written to the same correspondent about the Affairs of America, nine years before, at the time of the repeal of the Stamp Act.

"I am glad to hear the determination of the "House of Commons concerning the Stamp Act. "I rejoice, from my love of the human species, that "a million of men in America have some chance "of running the same great career which other free "people have held before them. I do not apprehend revolution or independence sooner than "these must and should come. A very little skill "and attention in the art of governing may preserve the supremacy of Britain as long as it ought "to be preserved. You can do me no favour more "obliging, than that of writing me often an account "of all occurrences in the debates on this affair. I "am much interested in the subject; very little in "the men who act on either side. I am not weak "enough greatly to admire their virtues, nor so "factious as to adopt their passions."

SECTION IV.

Continuation of the same subject.—HISTORICAL DISQUISITION CONCERNING INDIA. — *General Remarks on Dr.* ROBERTSON'S *Merits as an Historian.*

IN consequence of the interruption of Dr. Robertson's plans produced by the American Revolution, he was led to think of some other subject which might, in the mean time, give employment to his studious leisure. A letter, dated July 1778, to his friend the Rev. Mr. Waddilove, (now Dean of Rippon,) contains some important information with respect to his designs at this period.

"The state of our affairs in North America is "not such as to invite me to go on with my His- "tory of the New World. I must wait for times "of greater tranquillity, when I can write and the "public can read with more impartiality and better "information than at present. Every person with "whom I conversed in London confirmed me in "my resolution of making a pause for a little, until "it shall be known in what manner the ferment "will subside. But as it is neither my inclination "nor interest to be altogether idle, many of my "friends have suggested to me a new subject, the "History of Great Britain, from the Revolution to "the Accession of the House of Hanover. It will "be some satisfaction to me to enter on a domes- "tic subject, after being engaged so long on foreign "ones, where one-half of my time and labour were

" employed in teaching myself to understand man-
" ners, and laws, and forms, which I was to ex-
" plain to others. You know better than any body
" how much pains I bestowed in studying the con-
" stitution, the manners, and the commerce of Spa-
" nish America. The Review contained in the first
" volume of Charles V. was founded on researches
" still more laborious. I shall not be involved in
" the same painful inquiries, if I undertake the pre-
" sent work. I possess already as much knowledge
" of the British government and laws as usually is
" possessed by other persons who have been well
" educated and have lived in good company. A
" minute investigation of facts will be the chief
" object of my attention. With respect to these,
" I shall be much aided by the original papers pub-
" lished by Sir John Dalrymple and Macpherson,
" and lately by Lord Hardwicke. The Memoirs
" of Noailles, concerning the French negotiations
" in Spain, contain very curious information. I
" have got a very valuable collection of papers from
" the Duke of Montague, which belonged to the
" Duke of Shrewsbury, and I am promised the
" large collection of the Duke of Marlborough,
" which were formerly in the hands of Mr. Mallet.
" From these and other materials I hope to write
" a History which may be both entertaining and
" instructive. I know that I shall get upon dan-
" gerous ground, and must relate events concern-
" ing which our political factions entertain very
" different sentiments. But I am little alarmed
" with this. I flatter myself that I have temper
" enough to judge with impartiality; and if, after

" examining with candour, I do give offence, there
" is no man whose situation is more independent."

Whatever the motives were which induced him to relinquish this project, it is certain that it did not long occupy his thoughts. From a letter of Mr. Gibbon, it would appear to have been abandoned before the end of the year 1779. The passage is interesting, not only as it serves to ascertain the fact, but as it suggests a valuable hint with respect to a different historical subject.

" I remember a kind of engagement you had
" contracted to repeat your visit to London every
" second year, and I look forwards with pleasure
" to next spring, when your bond will naturally be-
" come due. I should almost hope that you would
" bring with you some fruits of your leisure, had I
" not been informed that you had totally relin-
" quished your design of continuing Mr. Hume's
" History of England. Notwithstanding the just
" and deep sense which I must entertain (if the
" intelligence be true) of our public loss, I have
" scarcely courage enough to blame you. The want
" of materials and the danger of offence are two
" formidable obstacles for an Historian who wishes
" to instruct, and who is determined not to betray
" his readers.—But if you leave the narrow limits
" of our island, there still remain, without return-
" ing to the troubled scene of America, many sub-
" jects not unworthy of your genius. Will you
" give me leave as a vague and indigested hint
" to suggest the History of the Protestants in
" France? the events are important in themselves,
" and intimately connected with the great Revolu-

" tions of Europe: some of the boldest or most
" amiable characters of modern times, the Admi-
" ral Coligny, Henry IV. &c. would be your pecu-
" liar heroes; the materials are copious, and authen-
" tic, and accessible; and the objects appear to
" stand at that just distance which excites curiosity
" without inspiring passion. Excuse the freedom,
" and weigh the merits (if any) of this proposal*."

As I have had very little access to see any of Dr. Robertson's answers to the letters of his correspondents, I am ignorant what reply he made to this suggestion of Mr. Gibbon, as well as of the circumstances that induced him to lay aside his plans with respect to the History of England. It is impossible, however, not to feel much regret that he did not carry them into execution. In spite of the obstacles which Mr. Gibbon mentions, there can be little doubt that the work would have been an important accession to English literature; and, in all probability, from the interesting nature of the subject, the most popular of his performances. The intrigues of the different factions during the reign of Queen Anne would have afforded an ample field for the exercise of his cool and discriminating judgement; the campaigns of Marlborough deserved such an Historian; while the literature and philosophy of that memorable period would have given full employment to those critical powers which he so eminently possessed, and of which he has unfortunately left no monument behind him. The slight sketches of this kind interspersed with the narrative

* See Appendix to the Life, Note F.

of Mr. Hume's History, have always been favourite passages with readers of taste: and, if I may be permitted to judge from Dr. Robertson's conversation, he would not, in this species of composition, have been surpassed by any of his contemporaries.

I have not heard of any other work that he projected after this period. He seems indeed soon to have abandoned all thoughts of writing any more for the public, and to have indulged the idea of prosecuting his studies in future for his private amusement. His circumstances were independent: he was approaching to the age of sixty, with a constitution considerably impaired by a sedentary life; and a long application to the compositions he had prepared for the press, had interfered with much of the gratification he might have enjoyed, if he had been at liberty to follow the impulse of his own taste and curiosity. Such a sacrifice must be more or less made by all who devote themselves to letters, whether with a view to emolument or to fame; nor would it perhaps be easy to make it, were it not for the prospect (seldom, alas! realized) of earning, by their exertions, that learned and honourable leisure which he was so fortunate as to attain. He retired from the business of the ecclesiastical courts about the same time; and, for seven or eight years, divided the hours which he could spare from his professional duties, between the luxury of reading and the conversation of his friends.

The activity of his mind, in the mean time, continued unimpaired; and the habits of study he had so long been accustomed to, gave a certain scope

and connexion even to his historical recreations. To one of these, which, from its accidental connexion with some of his former works, engaged his attention more closely than his ordinary pursuits, the public is indebted for a valuable performance, of which the materials seem almost insensibly to have swelled to a volume, long after his most intimate friends imagined that he had renounced all thoughts of the press. The Disquisition concerning Ancient India, which closed his historical labours, took its rise (as he himself informs us) "from the perusal of Major Rennell's Memoirs for "illustrating his Map of Indostan. This suggested "to him the idea of examining more fully than he "had done in the introductory book to his History "of America, into the knowledge which the An-"cients had of that country, and of considering "what is certain, what is obscure, and what is fabu-"lous, in the accounts of it which they have hand-"ed down to us."—"In undertaking this inquiry" (he adds) "he had originally no other object than "his own amusement and instruction; but in car-"rying it on, and consulting with care the authors "of antiquity, some facts hitherto unobserved, and "many which had not been examined with pro-"per attention, occurred; new views opened; his "ideas gradually extended, and became more in-"teresting; till at length he imagined that the "result of his researches might prove amusing and "instructive to others."

Such is the account given by himself of the origin and progress of a disquisition begun in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and in twelve months

brought to a conclusion; exhibiting, nevertheless, in every part, a diligence in research, a soundness of judgment, and a perspicuity of method not inferior to those which distinguish his other performances. From the nature of the subject it was impossible to render it equally amusing to ordinary readers, or to bestow on his language the same splendour and variety; but the style possesses all the characteristical beauties of his former compositions, as far as they could with propriety be introduced into a discourse, of which the general design excluded every superfluous and ambitious ornament. The observations in the *Appendix*, upon the character, the manners, and the institutions of the people of India, present a valuable outline of all the most important information concerning them, which was then accessible to the philosophers of Europe; and, if they have already lost part of their interest, in consequence of the astonishing discoveries which have been since brought to light in Asia, by a fortunate and unexampled combination of genius, learning, and official rank, in a few individuals whose names do honour to this country; they, at least, evince that ardent and enlightened curiosity which animated the Author's inquiries in his most advanced years; and afford a proof, that his mind kept pace, to the last, with the progress of historical knowledge.

In these observations, too, we may occasionally trace the influence of still higher motives; to which he has himself alluded, with an affecting solemnity, in the last sentences which he addressed to the public. "If I had aimed" (says he) "at nothing else than

"to describe the civil polity, the arts, the sciences, "and religious institutions, of one of the most an- "cient and most numerous races of men, that alone "would have led me into inquiries and discussions "both curious and instructive. I own, however, that "I have all along kept in view an object more inter- "esting, as well as of greater importance; and en- "tertain hopes, that if the Account which I have "given of the early and high civilization of India, "and of the wonderful progress of its inhabitants "in elegant arts and useful science, shall be re- "ceived as just and well established, it may have "some influence upon the behaviour of Europeans "towards that people. It was by an impartial and "candid inquiry into their manners, that the Em- "peror Akbar was led to consider the Hindoos as "no less entitled to protection and favour than his "other subjects; and to govern them with such "equity and mildness, as to merit from a grateful "people the honourable appellation of 'the Guar- "dian of Mankind.' If I might presume to hope, "that the description I have given of the manners "and institutions of the people of India could con- "tribute in the smallest degree, and with the most "remote influence, to render their character more "respectable, and their condition more happy, I "should close my literary labours with the satis- "faction of thinking that I have not lived or writ- "ten in vain *."

In concluding this general review of Dr. Robertson's publications, our attention is naturally led, in

* See Appendix to the Life, Note G.

the first place, to the extent and variety of his historical researches. In this respect, he has certainly not been surpassed by any writer of the present times, nor would it perhaps be easy to name another who has united to so luminous an arrangement of his materials, and such masterly skill in adorning them, an equal degree of industry and exactness in tracing them to their original sources. After a minute examination of the most disputed passages of his first performance, a late author * has ventured to pronounce him "the most faithful of Historians;" and I have no doubt that this honourable appellation will be sanctioned by those who shall examine his other works with the same acuteness, accuracy, and candour.

In the art of narration, too, which, next to correctness in the statement of facts, is the most essential qualification of an Historian, Dr. Robertson's skill is pre-eminent: perhaps I might venture to say, that in this art his chief and characteristical excellence as an Historian consists. I do not, at present, allude merely to the richness of colouring with which he occasionally arrests the attention: but to the distinctness, perspicuity, and fulness, with which he uniformly communicates historical information; carefully avoiding every reference to whatever previous knowledge of the subject his reader may accidentally possess. In this distinctness and perspicuity, so conspicuous in the great models of antiquity, some modern writers of unquestionable talents have failed to a degree which renders all their

* Mr. Laing.

other merits of little value;—a failure more particularly observable, since it became fashionable, after the example of Voltaire, to connect with the view of political transactions, an examination of their effects on the manners and condition of mankind, and to blend the lights of philosophy with the appropriate beauties of historical composition. In consequence of this innovation, while the province of the Historian has been enlarged and dignified, the difficulty of his task has increased in the same proportion: reduced, as he must frequently be, to the alternative, either of interrupting unseasonably the chain of events, or, by interweaving disquisition and narrative together, of sacrificing clearness to brevity. By few writers of the present age has this combination of philosophy with history been more frequently attempted than by Dr. Robertson; and by none have the inconveniences which it threatens been more successfully avoided. In the former respect his merit is great; but in the latter, he may be safely proposed as a pattern for imitation.

Nor does the beauty of his narrative consist only in the luminous distinctness and picturesque selection of his details. In a passage formerly quoted from one of Mr. Walpole's letters, it is mentioned, among the other recommendations of the History of Scotland, that, "although composed of pieces of "information, each of which would make a separate "memoir, yet the whole is hurried on into one un-"interrupted story." The remark is just, and it points at an excellence of the highest order, conspicuous in all Dr. Robertson's publications; the continuity which unites together the different parts of

his subject, in consequence of the address and felicity displayed in his transitions. It is this last circumstance which bestows on his works that unceasing interest which constitutes one of the principal charms in tales of fiction; an interest easy to support in relating a series of imaginary adventures, but which, in historical composition, evinces, more than any thing else, the hand of a master.

The attainment of these different perfections was undoubtedly much facilitated by the plan which he adopted of throwing into the form of Notes and Illustrations, whatever critical or scientific discussions appeared to him to interfere with the peculiar province of history. In one of the last conversations I had with him, he mentioned this as an improvement of considerable importance in historical writing; and his final judgment on the subject will be allowed to have great weight in favour of that mode of arrangement which he adopted. On this point, I know, there is a wide diversity of opinion: nor do I think myself entitled to pronounce with confidence upon either side, where the best judges have hesitated in their decision. Our late excellent colleague Mr. Smith carried to such a length his partiality to the ancient forms of classical composition, that he considered every species of note as a blemish or imperfection; indicating either an idle accumulation of superfluous particulars, or a want of skill and comprehension in the general design. Dr. Douglas too, the present Bishop of Salisbury, in a letter addressed to Dr. Robertson on occasion of his American History, appears dissatisfied with the local separation of the notes from the text; without,

however, disputing the general principle on which the arrangement of his materials proceeds. "I "think" (says he) "that your notes and illustra- "tions very frequently contain matter of the great- "est importance to the strengthening the argu- "ments and conclusions you adopt in the body of "the book; and they are so widely separated by the "mode of your publication, that the reader cannot "see, at one view, the great merit of your work. "Mr. Gibbon adopted this method, in imitation "of your Charles V.; but I believe he has found "the wishes of the public in favour of another ar- "rangement; for I understand in a new edition "of his History which we are soon to have, the notes "and illustrations are to be put at the bottom of "the pages to which they refer.—I know you will "excuse this liberty; and very probably, as you "have considered the matter more accurately than "such readers as I am, you can give very substan- "tial reasons for preferring the plan of throwing "the notes and illustrations to the end of the "volume."

On a question of this sort, the suggestions of so learned and judicious a critic are undoubtedly entitled to peculiar deference: but I must be permitted to express my doubts whether he has added to their weight, by appealing to the arrangement of Mr. Gibbon; which, in this instance, has always appeared to me to be inconvenient in the extreme. In no species of writing is it agreeable to have the attention so frequently withdrawn from the text; but in historical writing it is impossible to devise a more effectual expedient for counteracting the effects of the

Author's art. The curious research and the epigrammatic wit so often displayed in Mr. Gibbon's notes, and which sometimes render them more amusing than even the eloquent narrative which they are meant to illustrate, serve only to add to the embarrassment occasioned by this unfortunate distribution of his materials. He seems, indeed, from a letter published in his posthumous works, to have been fully satisfied, after a trial of both plans, that the preference was due to that which, after Dr. Robertson's example, he had originally pursued. "I "cannot be displeased" (he observes) "with the "too numerous and correct impressions which have "been published for the use of the Continent at "Basil in Switzerland. Of their fourteen octavo "volumes, the two last include the whole body of "the notes. The public importunity had forced me "to remove them from the end of the volume to "the bottom of the page; but I have often re-"pented of my compliance *."

It is remarkable that no alternative should have occurred to Mr. Gibbon between placing all his notes at the bottom of the page, or collecting them all in the form of an Appendix. In the first edition of his first volume, he followed Dr. Robertson implicitly in adopting the latter method; which, although by far the more unexceptionable of the two, might be obviously improved by some limitations. Mr. Hume, in a letter to Mr. Strahan, objects to it strongly. "One is plagued with Gibbon's notes,

* Vol. i. p. 178.

" according to the present method of printing the
" book. When a note is announced, you turn to
" the end of the volume, and there you often find
" nothing but a reference to an authority. All
" these authorities ought only to be printed at the
" margin or the bottom of the page *."

What Mr. Hume here remarks concerning references to authorities, may be extended to those short explanatory sentences, which, being intended to facilitate the reader's progress, should unquestionably be brought under his eye at the same time with the passage they are intended to elucidate. Dr. Robertson, as well as Mr. Gibbon, seems to have overlooked this distinction between explanatory hints, and *notes* intended for the gratification of the curious; and hence have arisen (at least in part) those inconveniences in the technical arrangement of his volumes, of which Dr. Douglas was led to complain.

A still more important blemish, however, it must be confessed, than what this respectable correspondent has specified, is sometimes the real source of the imperfection he has remarked; I mean, that a considerable portion of the matter which is parcelled out among the notes ought to have been incorporated with the text. Where a writer finds it necessary to enter into speculation and discussion, the whole of his argument should undoubtedly be stated at once, and not broken down into fragments, which the reader is to collect from different parts of the book. In those dissertations, therefore, which form so

* Gibbon's Post. Works, vol. i. p. 500.

considerable a part both of the History of Charles V. and of America, it would perhaps have been better if the Author had adhered less closely to the plan which he has so judiciously adopted in his historical narrative. The arguments which recommend it in the latter species of composition, it is sufficiently evident, do not apply to it when introduced into the former.

After all, whoever attempts to instruct the world by any literary undertaking, whether historical or speculative, will find it necessary, for the complete satisfaction of accurate inquirers, to engage in occasional discussions which could not be introduced into the body of the work, without digressions inconsistent with a simple and distinct arrangement; nor compressed into notes at the bottom of the page, without stopping the reader's progress, and misleading his attention. No writer has been more completely aware of this than Mr. Hume, who, in all his publications, both historical and philosophical, has distinguished carefully those incidental suggestions which are necessary to prevent any hesitation about the text, from the critical disquisitions useful for satisfying men of curious research, or for obviating the doubts of more refined speculation. Dr. Robertson's subjects, in all his Histories excepting that of Scotland, engaged him in inquiries more open to controversy, and in arguments resting upon information less accessible to ordinary readers, than those of Mr. Hume. His proofs and illustrations, accordingly, bear a far greater proportion to the size of his volumes; but I am inclined

to think, that, if examined with proper attention, the arrangement of them will be found (with a few exceptions) to reflect no less honour on his taste and discernment.

The stress which Dr. Robertson himself laid on this peculiarity in his mode of composition, added to the indecision of Mr. Gibbon with respect to its propriety, will, I hope, apologise sufficiently for the minuteness with which some of the foregoing particulars are stated.—The general question concerning the expediency of imitating the ancients, in limiting an author's intercourse with his readers, to what is conveyed in the text, does not seem to me to admit of discussion. Considered as sources of authentic and of accurate information, the value of the classics is infinitely diminished by this very circumstance; and few, I believe, have studied Mr. Smith's works (particularly his Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations) without regretting, on some occasions, the omission of his authorities; and, on others, the digressions into which he has been led, by conforming so scrupulously to the example of antiquity.

Of Dr. Robertson's merits as an Historian, as far as they are connected with the genius of the language in which he wrote, it does not become a native of this part of the Island to express a decided opinion. And accordingly, in the few remarks which I am to hazard on that subject, although I shall state my own judgement with freedom, I would be understood to write with all possible diffidence.

The general strain of his composition is flowing, equal, and majestic; harmonious beyond that of most English writers, yet seldom deviating, in quest of harmony, into inversion, redundancy, or affectation. If, in some passages, it may be thought that the effect might have been heightened by somewhat more of variety in the structure and cadence of his periods, it must be recollected that this criticism involves an encomium on the beauty of his style; for it is only where the ear is habitually gratified, that the rhythm of composition becomes an object of the reader's attention.

In comparing his turn of expression with that of the Classical Writers of England, a difference may, I think, be perceived; originating in the provincial situation of the country where he received his education and spent his life: and, if I am not much mistaken, the same observation may be extended, in a greater or less degree, to most of our contemporaries who have laboured under similar disadvantages. I do not allude, at present, to what are commonly called *Scotticisms;* for, from these Dr. Robertson's works have been allowed, by the most competent judges, to be remarkably free; but to an occasional substitution of general or of circuitous modes of expression, instead of the simple and specific English phrase. An author who lives at a distance from the acknowledged standard of elegance, writes in a dialect different from that in which he is accustomed to speak; and is naturally led to evade, as much as possible, the hazardous use of idiomatical phrases, by the employment of such as accord with the general analogy of the language.

Hence, in all the lighter and more familiar kinds of writing, the risk of sacrificing ease and vivacity, and what Dr. Johnson calls *genuine Anglicism**, in order to secure correctness and purity; and hence the difficulties with which those of our countrymen have had to struggle, who have aimed at the freedom of the epistolary style, or who have attempted to catch the shadowy and fleeting forms of Comic Dialogue. The peculiarity in the manner of *Livy*, censured by *Asinius Pollio*, was probably of a similar description; arising less from an admixture of *Paduan* idioms, than from the absence of such as marked the dialect of *Rome*. "In Tito Livio," (says Quinctilian,) "miræ facundiæ viro, putat inesse "Pollio Asinius quandam Patavinitatem. Quare, "si fieri potest, et verba omnia, et vox, hujus alum-"num Urbis oleant; ut oratio Romana planè vi-"deatur, non civitate donata*."

If, however, in these and a few other respects, important advantages are possessed by those whose standard of propriety is always before them in their ordinary habits of conversation and of business, it must perhaps be granted, on the other hand, that an ear thus familiarized from infancy to phrases which it has been accustomed to retain, without any selection, or any reference to general principles, can scarcely fail to have some effect in blunting an author's discrimination between the established modes of classical expression and the accidental

* "If Addison's language had been less idiomatical, it would "have lost something of its genuine Anglicism."——*Lives of the Poets.*

† Quinctil. l. viii. c. 1.

jargon of the day. Illustrations of this remark might be easily collected from writers of the highest and most deserved reputation; more particularly from some who have cultivated, with the greatest success, the appropriate graces of the English tongue.—Even the works of Dr. Middleton, which have been often recommended to Scotchmen as the safest models for their imitation, abound with instances of colloquial language, sanctioned probably by the authority of the fashionable speakers of his time, but which, I should suppose, would now be considered as vulgarisms by such of his countrymen as have formed their taste on the compositions either of an earlier or of a later period.

In guarding against these temporary modes of speech, the provincial residence of a Scotchman may sometimes have its use, by teaching him to distrust his ear as an arbiter of elegance, and to appeal on every questionable point to the practice of those whose established reputation gives the stamp of propriety to the phraseology they have employed. If his composition be deficient in ease, it may be expected not to fall under the ordinary standard, in point of purity: nay, it is not impossible, that, in his solicitude to avoid idiomatical phrases, he may be occasionally led to animate and to ennoble his diction; or, by uncommon and fortunate combinations of words, to give to familiar ideas the charm of novelty.

The species of composition to which Dr. Robertson directed his studies, was peculiarly adapted to his local situation, by affording him an opportunity of displaying all the talents he possessed, without

imposing on him a trial of his powers in those kinds of writing where a Scotchman is most likely to fail. In delineating the characters of Princes, Statesmen, and Warriors, or in recording events that have happened on the great theatre of public affairs, a certain elevation of language is naturally inspired by the magnitude of the subject. The engaging and pathetic details of domestic life vanish before the eye which contemplates the fortunes of nations, and the Revolutions of Empire; and there is even a gravity of manner, exclusive of every thing familiar or flippant, which accords with our idea of him who sits in judgment on the generations that are past. It may, perhaps, be questioned by some, whether Dr. Robertson has not carried to an extreme his idea of what he has himself called the *dignity of history*; but, whatever opinion we form on this point, it cannot be disputed, that his plan of separating the materials of historical composition from those which fall under the provinces of the Antiquary, and of the writer of Memoirs, was on the whole happily conceived; and that one great charm of his works arises from the taste and judgment with which he has carried it into execution.—Nor has he suffered this scrupulous regard to the unity of historical style to exclude that variety which was necessary for keeping alive the reader's attention. Whenever his subject admits of being enriched or adorned by political or philosophical disquisition, by picturesque description, or by the interesting details of a romantic episode, he scruples not to try his strength with those who have excelled the most in these different departments of literature; uniformly,

however, avoiding to mingle in the humble scenes of ordinary life, or to meet his rivals on any ground where he did not feel himself completely their equal.

To this systematical selection of the more regular and analogical forms of construction, is to be ascribed, in a considerable degree, his popularity among foreigners, who unite in esteeming him, not only as one of the most eloquent, but as one of the most intelligible of our writers. And it may be presumed, the same circumstance will secure in his favour the suffrages of posterity, when the passing idioms generated by the capricious modes of our own times, shall be antiquated or forgotten*.

I have only to add, that some of the foregoing observations apply more strongly to Dr. Robertson's earlier than to his later publications. In the History of Charles V., and still more in that of America, he ventures on expressions which he would not have hazarded before the establishment of his literary name; and accordingly it may be doubted, whether, in consequence of this circumstance, he did not lose in purity of diction what he gained in ease and freedom. Perhaps, on the whole, it will be found that of all his performances, Charles V. is that which unites the various requisites of good writing in the greatest degree. The style is more natural and flowing than that of the History of Scotland; while, at the same time, idiomatical phrases are introduced with so sparing and timid a hand, that it is easy to perceive the Author's attention to correctness was not sensibly diminished. In the History

* See Appendix to the Life, Note H.

of America, although it contains many passages equal, if not superior, to any thing else in his writings, the composition does not seem to me to be so uniformly polished as that of his former works; nor does it always possess, in the same degree, the recommendations of conciseness and simplicity*.

SECTION V.

Review of the more active Occupations of Dr. ROBERTSON'S *Life.—Conclusion of the Narrative.—Sketch of his Character.*

IN reviewing the History of Dr. Robertson's Life, our attention has hitherto been confined to those pursuits which formed the habitual occupation of his mind; and which have left behind them unperishable monuments. His life, however, was not devoted wholly to the cultivation of letters. His talents fitted him in an eminent degree for the business of the world; and the station in which Providence placed him opened to him a field, which, however unequal to his ambition or to his genius, afforded him the means of evincing what he might have accomplished, if his sphere of exertion had been more extensive and brilliant.

Among the active scenes in which he had an opportunity to engage, the most conspicuous was presented to him by the Supreme Ecclesiastical

* See Appendix to the Life, Note I.

Court in Scotland. Of the constitution of this court, accordingly, which differs in some remarkable particulars from the clerical convocations in other Christian countries, a general outline is necessary, in order to convey a just idea of the abilities which secured to him, for a long course of years, an unrivalled influence in guiding its deliberations *.

"The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is composed of representatives from the presbyteries; from the royal boroughs; from the four universities; and from the Scotch church of Camp-

* For the materials both of this outline and of the subsequent view of Dr. Robertson's system of ecclesiastical policy, I am indebted to a paper drawn up (at the request of Dr. Robertson's son,) by the Rev. George Hill, D.D. Principal of St. Mary's College in the University of St. Andrews; a gentleman intimately connected with Dr. Robertson by friendship, and highly respected by him for the talents and eloquence which he has for many years displayed in the ecclesiastical courts. In general I have transcribed Dr. Hill's words, taking the liberty occasionally to make such slight alterations on the language as were necessary for preserving some degree of uniformity in the style of my narrative; and a few retrenchments, which the plan of this Memoir rendered unavoidable. That the public, however, may not lose any part of so valuable a communication, I have inserted in the Appendix, the paragraphs which are here omitted.

As Dr. Hill's paper was submitted to the examination, and received the unqualified approbation of three of Dr. Robertson's most confidential friends (1), it may be regarded as an authentic statement of his general principles of church government. For the sake of connection, I have adopted into this Section such parts of it as seemed to me to be necessary for completing the history of his life; abstaining, however, scrupulously from hazarding any ideas of my own, on the subject to which it relates.

(1) Drs. Blair, Carlyle, and Grieve.

vere in Holland. The presbyteries send two hundred and ninety members, of whom two hundred and one are ministers, and eighty-nine lay-elders; the royal boroughs send sixty-seven members, all of whom are laymen; the universities send five members, who may be either laymen or ministers holding an office in the university; and the church of Campvere sends two members, one minister, and one lay-elder. The whole number is three hundred and sixty-four, of whom two hundred and two are ministers, and one hundred and sixty-two laymen; including in the latter class the members from the universities. The annual sittings of the Assembly continue only for ten days; but a Committee of the whole House (called the Commission) has four stated Meetings in the year, for the dispatch of whatever business the General Assembly has been unable to overtake*.

In subordination to this supreme court, there is a series of inferior judicatories rising, one above another, in authority.—The lowest of these is the *Kirk Sessions*, or Parochial Consistories; composed of the ministers, together with the lay-elders of their respective parishes. The ministers of a number of contiguous parishes, together with certain representatives from the Kirk Sessions, form a *Presbytery;* and a plurality of presbyteries (differing in number according to accidental circumstances) form a provincial *Synod.*

While the constitution of the Scottish church admits of no superiority of one minister above another, it requires from all its individual members, and

* See Appendix to the Life, Note K.

from all its inferior judicatories, strict obedience to those who are placed in authority over them. Every court is bound to lay the record of all its proceedings from time to time before the tribunal which is its immediate superior; any part of its proceedings may be brought by appeal or complaint under the review of a higher jurisdiction; and every minister, when he receives orders, comes under a solemn engagement, "to assert, maintain, and defend the doctrines, discipline, and government of the church; and never "to attempt any thing, directly or indirectly, which "may tend to its subversion or prejudice."

In consequence of this subordination of judicatories, the General Assembly determines, as the court of last resort, all the causes brought under its review, and has the power of enforcing, without controul, obedience to its decrees. It possesses also extensive legislative powers, as it may, with the concurrence of a majority of presbyteries, enact laws for the government of the whole church.

By the act of 1592, which gave a legal establishment to the form of church government now delineated, the patron of a vacant parish was entitled to present to the presbytery a person properly qualified; and the presbytery were required, after subjecting the presentee to certain trials and examinations, of which they were constituted the judges, "to ordain and settle him as minister of the parish, "provided no relevant objection should be stated "to his life, doctrine, and qualifications." This right of presentation, however, although conferred by the fundamental charter of Presbyterian government in Scotland, was early complained of as a

grievance; and accordingly it was abolished by an act passed under the Usurpation. At the Restoration it was again recovered, but it was retained only for a few years; the Revolution having introduced a new system, which vested the right of election in the heritors, elders, and heads of families in the parish. The 10th of Queen Anne at last restored the rights of patrons; but the exercise of these rights was found to be so extremely unpopular, that ministers were generally settled, till after the year 1730, in the manner prescribed by the Act of King William.

During this long period, an aversion to the law of patronage took deep root in the minds of the people; and the circumstances of the times were such as to render it inexpedient for the church courts to contend with a prejudice so inveterate and universal.

When the Presbyterian establishment fell a sacrifice to the policy introduced at the Restoration, the ministers who refused to conform to prelacy were ejected from their churches, and underwent a severe persecution. The firmness which they displayed on this occasion exhibits a strength of character which has never been surpassed; but their situation, while deprived of the countenance of law, and left entirely to the guidance of private conscience, was necessarily such, as to inspire *independent* principles inconsistent with regular subordination and discipline; and, accordingly, at the Revolution, when the Presbyterian government was re-established, and many of the ejected ministers restored to their pulpits, they brought along with them into

the church a spirit scarcely compatible with the connection in which it stood with the paramount authority of the state. Their successors, trained in the same sentiments, saw the right of patronage revived in times which they regarded with a jealous eye; and, without allowing themselves to weigh the expediency of that mode of settlement, they considered it as an appendage of episcopacy which it was the duty of every good Presbyterian to oppose.—While the people, therefore, resisted with violence the first attempt which was made about the year 1730 to exercise this right, the church courts, although they could not entirely disregard the law, contrived in many instances to render it ineffectual, and sanctioned by their authority the prevailing prejudices against it. They admitted it as an uncontrovertible principle in Presbyterian church government, that a presentee, although perfectly well qualified, and unexceptionable in life and doctrine, was nevertheless inadmissible to his clerical office, till the concurrence of the people who were to be under his ministry had been regularly ascertained. The form of expressing this concurrence was by the subscription of a paper termed a *Call;* which was considered as a step so indispensable towards constituting the pastoral relation, that the church courts, when dissatisfied with it, as an expression of the general wishes of the parish, sometimes set aside the presentee altogether; and, when they did authorize a settlement, proceeded in a manner which sufficiently implied a greater respect for the call than for the presentation.

The circumstances understood to be necessary for constituting an adequate *call*, were unsusceptible of a precise definition. The unanimous consent of landholders, elders, and heads of families, was seldom to be looked for; nor was even an absolute majority considered as indispensable, if the concurrence afforded a reasonable prospect of an harmonious and useful settlement. This principle of decision was so vague in itself, and so arbitrary in its application, that much was left in the church courts to the private judgment of individuals, and much to their prejudices and passions; while the people, finding that a noisy and strenuous opposition seldom failed of success, were encouraged to prosecute their object by tumult and violence. Many of the clergy, considering it as a matter of conscience not to take any share in the settlement of an obnoxious presentee, refused on such occasions to carry into execution the orders of their superiors; and such was the temper of the times, that the leading men of the Assembly, although they wished to support the law of the land, found themselves obliged to have recourse to expedients; imposing slight censures on the disobedient, and appointing special committees (whom it was found sometimes necessary to protect by a military force) to discharge the duties which the others had declined.

Measures of this kind, pursued with little variation for about twenty years, had so relaxed the discipline of the church, that individuals openly claimed it as a right to disobey its sentences, whenever their disobedience was justified according

to the best of their judgment, by a principle of conscience.

Such was the state of the ecclesiastical establishment in Scotland when Dr. Robertson and his friends began to take an active share in its business. Dissatisfied with the system adopted by his predecessors, and convinced that the more free any constitution is, the greater is the danger of violating its fundamental laws, his vigorous and enlightened mind suggested to him the necessity of opposing more decisive measures to these growing disorders, and of maintaining the authority of the church by enforcing the submission of all its members. The two capital articles by which he conceived Presbytery to be distinguished from every other ecclesiastical establishment, were the parity of its ministers, and the subordination of its judicatories.—"Wherever there is a subordination of courts," (as he has himself observed in an authentic document of his ecclesiastical principles,) "there is one court that "must be supreme; for subordination were in vain, "if it did not terminate in some last resort. Such "a supreme judicature is the General Assembly of "the Church of Scotland; and therefore, if its "decisions could be disputed and disobeyed by in-"ferior courts with impunity, the Presbyterian con-"stitution would be entirely overturned. On this "supposition, there is no occasion for the Church "of Scotland to meet in its General Assemblies "any more; its government is at an end; and it "is exposed to the contempt and scorn of the "world, as a church without union, order, or "discipline; destitute of strength to support its

"own constitution, and falling into ruins by the "abuse of liberty."

A question which came under the consideration of the Assembly in the year 1751, when he spoke for the first time in that supreme court, afforded him an opportunity of unfolding his general principles of ecclesiastical government. The conduct of a clergyman, who had disobeyed a sentence of a former Assembly, gave rise to a warm discussion; in the course of which Dr. Robertson, supported by a few of his friends, contended for the expediency of a severe and exemplary sentence. But this doctrine was then so little understood or relished, that he was left in an inconsiderable minority.

The *Commission* of that Assembly, at their meeting in November 1751, ordered the Presbytery of Dunfermline, which had already been guilty of disobedience, to admit Mr. Richardson as minister of Inverkeithing; intimating to them, at the same time, that in case of their continued contumacy, the Commission was to proceed, at their next meeting in March, to a very high censure. The Presbytery again disobeyed; and yet the Commission, with a preposterous lenity, suffered their conduct to pass with impunity. The inconsistency and inexpediency of this sentence were urged strenuously by Dr. Robertson and his friends, who in their *dissent*, or protest against it, have left a valuable record of the general principles on which they acted. The paper is still extant, and, though evidently a hasty composition, bears, in various passages, the marks of Dr. Robertson's hand *.

* See Appendix to the Life, Note L.

Dr. Robertson argued this cause in the General Assembly 1752; and, such was the impression made by the argument contained in the protest, and more fully illustrated in his speech, that the Supreme Court reversed the judgment of the Commission, and deposed one of the ministers of the presbytery of Dunfermline, for disobeying the orders of his superiors.

This decision was the complete triumph of the principles for which Dr. Robertson and his friends had struggled. It put an end to those temporary expedients and devices which had hitherto been adopted in the settlement of parishes: it put an end to those extraordinary committees which Assemblies had been in use to appoint for relieving disobedient presbyteries from their duty; and it administered to the inferior judicatories, as well as to individuals, an useful lesson of that subordination which the peace of society requires.

The success of these attempts had probably some effect in determining Dr. Robertson to continue his attention to the affairs of the church; more especially, after his office in the University put it in his power to be returned annually as a representative to the General Assembly. By an uninterrupted attendance in that court for nearly twenty years, he acquired an intimate acquaintance with the whole train of its business; while the influence which he thus secured was increased and confirmed by his conciliating manners; by the charms of his conversation; and by the celebrity of his name. He had the happiness also of being warmly supported by most of the friends who

joined him in the Assembly 1751; and who, without any jealousy of the ascendant which he possessed, arranged themselves with cordiality under his standard. The period from his appointment as Principal of the University till his retreat from public life, came, accordingly, to be distinguished by the name of Dr. Robertson's *administration:* a name which implied, not any appointment from Government, nor any power in the distribution of favours; but merely the weight he derived from the confidence of a great majority of his brethren, who approved of the general principles on which he acted.

The circumstances which chiefly distinguished his system of policy were, *first*, a steady and uniform support of the law of patronage; and, *secondly*, an impartial exercise of the judicial power of the church *.

In the former of these respects, his exertions are supposed by his friends, not only to have produced in the ecclesiastical establishment a tranquillity unknown in former times; but to have contributed, in no small degree, to the peace and good order of the country. The public language of the church seems to bear testimony to the prevalence of these ideas. For a long series of years annual instructions had been given to the *Commission*, "to make due application to the King and Parliament for redress of the grievance of patronage, in case a favourable opportunity for doing so should occur." But these instructions were omitted in 1784, soon after

* See Appendix to the Life, Note M.

Dr. Robertson retired from the business of the Assembly; and they have never since been renewed.

A systematical regularity, to which the church of Scotland had been little accustomed, in the exercise of its judicial power, was another effect of the ascendant which Dr. Robertson possessed in the conduct of its business.

A court so popular in its constitution as the General Assembly, is but ill calculated for the patient and dispassionate investigation necessary for the administration of justice. As its annual sittings, too, continue only for a few days, its mode of procedure (irregular and loose as it is in many respects) is very imperfectly understood by the great majority of clerical members, who enjoy a seat in it only once in four or five years: hence, an inattention to forms; and a disposition to undervalue their importance, when they appear to stand in the way of immediate expediency. To correct, as far as possible, this unfortunate bias, inherent in the constitution of all popular tribunals, Dr. Robertson felt it to be his duty to employ all his abilities; convinced that a wise and impartial administration of justice can only be effectually secured by a strict adherence to established rules. A complete acquaintance with these, which he soon acquired from his regular attendance on the deliberations of the Assembly, gave him a decided superiority over those who were only occasionally members; and he was enabled gradually to enforce their strict observance by the confidence which was generally reposed in his principles and his talents.

Such were the objects which Dr. Robertson had

chiefly in view as an ecclesiastical leader, and which he prosecuted, during thirty years, with so great steadiness and success, that not only the system introduced by him continues still in vigour, but the decisions which he dictated form a sort of *Common Law* of the church*."—With respect to the various incidental discussions in which he was, on different occasions, called on to take an active concern, it is impossible for me to enter into detail. One of these, however, which occurred towards the close of his public life, is of too memorable a nature to be passed over in silence.—

The disturbances occasioned in Scotland in 1779, by the proposed extension to that part of the kingdom of the repeal of the penal laws against Roman Catholics, are well known to all who have the slightest acquaintance with the history of that period; and are still fresh in the recollection of the greater part of this Society. Some of us too are able to bear testimony, from what fell under our own immediate observation, to the firmness and tranquillity which Dr. Robertson displayed at a very critical juncture; when, after repeated acts of successful and unpunished outrage, committed in different parts of this city, a furious populace threatened an attack on his house, and were only restrained by a military force from sacrificing his life to their vengeance.

The leading principles which on that occasion directed his conduct in the church courts, will be best understood from a statement of facts which

* Thus far I have availed myself of Dr. Hill's communication. A more full illustration of some of the particulars here stated, will be found in the Appendix.

formed part of one of his speeches in the subsequent Assembly *.

"The first intimation I had of any intention to "grant relief to Papists from the rigour of penal "statutes, was in the newspapers. Though I had "observed with pleasure, the rapid progress of li-"beral sentiments in this enlightened age; though "I knew that science and philosophy had diffused "the spirit of toleration through almost every part "of Europe; yet I was so well acquainted with the "deep-rooted aversion of Britons to the doctrines "and spirit of Popery, that I suspected this mo-"tion for giving relief to Papists to be premature. "I was afraid, on the one hand, that the liberal "sentiments of those by whom it was made might "induce them to grant too much. I dreaded, on "the other, that past offences might be imputed "to the Catholics of the present age, and exclude "them from that degree of indulgence, which I "considered as no less beneficial to the nation, "than suitable to the spirit of the Gospel. But "when I observed the uncommon unanimity with "which the bill was carried through both houses; "when I saw Ministry and Opposition vying with "each other in activity to forward it; when I be-

* The following extract is transcribed, with some trifling verbal corrections, from an account of the proceedings of the General Assembly, published in the Scots Magazine for 1779. As the account in general (I am assured) is executed with correctness and impartiality, the *substance* of Dr. Robertson's speech may be presumed to be faithfully stated; but, in other respects, ample allowances must be made for the inaccuracies to be expected from an anonymous reporter, writing (as is probable) from memory, or from imperfect notes.

"held that respectable body who assume to them-
"selves the distinguishing appellation of *Old*
"*Whigs* taking the lead avowedly in supporting
"it; when I observed a Bench of Bishops, of whom
"I may justly say, that, in learning, in decency
"of manners, and in zeal for the Protestant reli-
"gion, they are not inferior to any of their prede-
"cessors, co-operating heartily with the other pro-
"moters of that bill, my curiosity to know pre-
"cisely the nature and extent of the indulgence
"granted, became very great. Upon perusing the
"bill itself, all my apprehensions vanished; the
"relief given to Papists appeared neither too great
"nor too little. By the statute of last session, no
"political power is conferred on Papists. They
"are not entitled to hold any public office. They
"can neither elect, nor be elected, members of
"any corporation; far less can they chuse, or be
"chosen, members of the House of Commons. In
"consequence of this statute, an English Papist
"has not acquired the privileges of a citizen; he
"is restored only to the rights of a man. By a
"law passed in a season of jealousy, alarm, and
"faction, Papists were rendered incapable of inhe-
"riting property by succession or conveyance, of
"transmitting it to others, or of acquiring it by
"purchase; and the ecclesiastics of that religion
"who should take upon them the education of
"youth, were to be punished with perpetual impri-
"sonment. It is from these penalties and disabi-
"lities alone, that they are now relieved. They
"may now inherit, they may devise, they may pur-
"chase. Formerly they were in a state of proscrip-

" tion and incapacity; now they are rendered what
" the law calls *personæ;* capable of legal functions
" in the possession and disposal of their own pro-
" perty. Nor are these concessions gratuitous.
" Before a Papist can enjoy the benefit of them, he
" must swear allegiance to our gracious Sovereign;
" he must abjure the Pretender; he must reject
" as an impious position, that it is lawful to mur-
" der or destroy any person under the pretence of
" their being heretics; he must declare it to be an
" unchristian principle, that faith is not to be kept
" with heretics; he must disclaim the power of the
" Pope to dispense with the obligation of an oath;
" he must swear, that it is no article of his faith
" that a Pope or Council can either depose princes,
" or exercise any civil or temporal jurisdiction within
" this realm: in short, he must give every security
" that the most scrupulous anxiety could devise, to
" demean himself as a loyal and peaceable subject.
" These slender rights, the lowest a man can claim
" or enjoy in a social state, are the amount of all
" the mighty and dreaded acquisitions made by
" Papists in virtue of this law. I rejoiced in the
" temperate wisdom of the legislature, and fore-
" saw, that a wealthy body of subjects in England,
" and a very numerous one in Ireland, would, in-
" stead of continuing adverse to a government which
" treated them with rigour, become attached to
" their King and country by the most powerful of
" all ties, gratitude for favours received, and desire
" of securing the continuance of favour, by dutiful
" conduct. With such views of the salutary effects
" of the repeal, it was impossible not to wish that

" the benefit of it might be extended to the Ro-
" man Catholics in Scotland. * * * * *
* * * * * *

" As soon, however, as I perceived the extent
" and violence of the flame which the discussion
" of this subject had kindled in Scotland, my ideas
" concerning the expedience at this juncture of the
" measure in question, began to alter. For al-
" though I did think, and I do still believe, that
" if the Protestants in this country had acquiesced
" in the repeal as quietly as our brethren in Eng-
" land and Ireland, a fatal blow would have been
" given to Popery in the British dominions; I
" knew, that in legislation, the sentiments and
" dispositions of the people for whom laws are
" made, should be attended to with care. I re-
" membered that one of the wisest men of anti-
" quity declared, that he had framed for his fellow-
" citizens not the best laws, but the best laws which
" they could bear. I recollected with reverence,
" that the Divine Legislator himself, accommoda-
" ting his dispensations to the frailty of his sub-
" jects, had given the Israelites for a season, *sta-*
" *tutes which were not good.* Even the prejudices
" of the people are, in my opinion, respectable;
" and an indulgent legislature ought not unneces-
" sarily to run counter to them. It appeared mani-
" festly to be sound policy, in the present temper
" of the people, to soothe rather than to irritate
" them; and, however ill-founded their apprehen-
" sions might be, some concession was now re-
" quisite, in order to remove them. In every ar-
" gument against the repeal of the penal laws, what

" seemed chiefly to alarm my brethren who were
" averse to it, was the liberty which, as they sup-
" posed, was given by the act of last session to
" Popish ecclesiastics to open schools, and take
" upon them the public instruction of youth. In
" order to quiet their fears with respect to this, I
" applied to His Majesty's Advocate and Solicitor-
" General, and, by their permission, I proposed to
" a respectable minister and elder of this church,
" who deservedly possess much credit with the op-
" posers of this repeal, that such provisos should
" be inserted in the bill which was to be moved in
" Parliament, for restraining the Popish clergy in
" this point, as would obviate every danger appre-
" hended. These gentlemen fairly told me, that
" if such a proposition had been made more early,
" they did not doubt that it might have produced
" good effects; but now matters were gone so far,
" that they were persuaded nothing less would sa-
" tisfy the people than a resolution to drop the bill
" altogether. Persuaded of the truth of what they
" represented, seeing the alarm spread rapidly in
" every quarter, and knowing well how imperfectly
" transactions in this country are understood in the
" other part of the island, I considered it as my
" duty to lay before His Majesty's servants in Lon-
" don, a fair state of the sentiments of the people
" in Scotland. My station in the church, I thought,
" intitled me to take this liberty in a matter purely
" ecclesiastical. I flattered myself, that my avowed
" approbation and strenuous support of a measure
" which had been unhappily so much misunder-
" stood, might give some weight to my represen-

" tations. I informed them, that the design of
" extending the repeal of the penal statutes of King
" William to Scotland, had excited a very general
" alarm: that the spirit of opposition to this mea-
" sure spread among the King's most loyal and at-
" tached subjects in this country: that nothing
" would calm and appease them, but the relinquish-
" ing all thoughts of such a bill: that the procur-
" ing of the intended relaxation for a handful of
" Catholics, was not an advantage to be put in
" competition with the imprudence of irritating so
" great a body of well-affected subjects: that if the
" measure were persisted in, fatal effects would fol-
" low, and no man, how great soever his sagacity
" might be, could venture to foretell what would
" be the extent of the danger, and what the violent
" operations of an incensed populace: that, ground-
" less as the fears of the people might be, it was
" prudent to quiet them: and that the same wis-
" dom and moderation which had induced Govern-
" ment, some years ago, to repeal the act for na-
" turalizing the Jews, in consequence of an alarm
" as ill-grounded in the southern parts of the island,
" ought now to make a similar concession, from
" indulgence to the prejudice of the people on this
" side of the Tweed.

" Such has been the tenor of my conduct. While
" I thought a repeal of the penal statutes would
" produce good effects, I supported it openly:
" when I foresaw bad consequences from persisting
" in a measure which I had warmly approved, I
" preferred the public good to my own private sen-
" timents; I honestly remonstrated against it;

"and I have the satisfaction to think, that I am "the only private person (as far as I know) in "Scotland, who applied to those in power, in or- "der to prevent this much dreaded repeal, which "has been represented as the subversion of every "sacred right for which our ancestors contended "and suffered."

* * * *

The last Assembly in which Dr. Robertson sat was that of 1780. While his faculties were yet vigorous, his constitution unbroken, and his influence undiminished, he chose to withdraw from the active scenes in which he had so long borne a part, and to consecrate the remainder of his life to the quiet pursuits of study, and to the pastoral duties of his profession. His retreat was deeply regretted and sincerely felt by his friends; nor was it less lamented by many individuals of the opposite party in the church, who, while they resisted his principles of ecclesiastical policy, loved his candour, aud respected his integrity*.

Among these, there is one, whose liberal and affectionate zeal in embalming the memory of a political antagonist, recalls to our recollection, amidst the unrelenting rancour which disgraces the factions of modern times, the memorable tribute which *Metellus* paid to the virtues of *Scipio* on the day of his funeral: *Ite, Filii, celebrate exequias; nunquam Civis majoris funus videbitis* †.—I need scarcely, after what I have hinted, mention to the Society

* See Appendix to the Life, Note N.

† Plin. Hist. Nat. vii. 44.

the name of Dr. Erskine; of whose Sermon on the death of his colleague, it is difficult to say, whether it reflects greater honour on the character of the Writer, or of him whom it commemorates. The Author will, I hope, pardon me for transcribing one passage, which is intimately connected with this part of my subject, and which combines, with a testimony of inestimable value to Dr. Robertson's fame, some important information which I could not supply from any source of equal authority.

"His speeches in church courts were admired by "those whom they did not convince, and acquired "and preserved him an influence over a majority "in them, which none before him enjoyed; though "his measures were sometimes new, and warmly, "and with great strength of argument, opposed, "both from the press, and in the General Assem-"bly. To this influence many causes contributed: "—his firm adherence to the general principles of "church policy, which he early adopted; his saga-"city in forming plans; his steadiness in execut-"ing them; his quick discernment of whatever "might hinder or promote his designs; his bold-"ness in encountering difficulties; his presence of "mind in improving every occasional advantage; "the address with which, when he saw it necessary, "he could make an honourable retreat; and his "skill in stating a vote, and seizing the favourable "moment for ending a debate, and urging a deci-"sion. He guided and governed others, without "seeming to assume any superiority over them; "and fixed and strengthened his power; by often, "in matters of form and expediency, preferring the

" opinions of those with whom he acted, to his
" own. In former times, hardly any rose up to speak
" in the General Assembly, till called upon by the
" *Moderator*, unless men advanced in years, of
" high rank, or of established characters. His ex-
" ample and influence encouraged young men of
" abilities to take their share of public business;
" and thus deprived *Moderators* of an engine for
" preventing causes being fairly and impartially dis-
" cussed. The power of others, who formerly had
" in some measure guided ecclesiastical affairs, was
" derived from ministers of state, and expired with
" their fall. His remained unhurt amidst frequent
" changes of administration. Great men in office
" were always ready to countenance him, to co-
" operate with him, and to avail themselves of his
" aid. But he judged for himself, and scorned to
" be their slave; or to submit to receive their in-
" structions. Hence, his influence, not confined
" to men of mercenary views, extended to many of
" a free and independent spirit, who supported, be-
" cause they approved, his measures; which others,
" from the same independent spirit, thought it
" their duty steadily to oppose.

" Deliberate in forming his judgment, but, when
" formed, not easily moved to renounce it, he
" sometimes viewed the altered plans of others with
" too suspicious an eye. Hence, there were able
" and worthy men, of whom he expressed himself
" less favourably, and whose latter appearances in
" church judicatories, he censured as inconsistent
" with principles which they had formerly pro-
" fessed: while they maintained, that the system

" of managing church affairs was changed, not their
" opinions or conduct. Still, however, keen and
" determined opposition to his schemes of ecclesi-
" astical policy, neither extinguished his esteem,
" nor forfeited his friendly offices, when he saw
" opposition carried on without rancour, and when
" he believed that it originated from conscience and
" principle, not from personal animosity, or envy,
" or ambition*."

I shall not presume to add any thing in illustration of these remarks. The greater part of them relate to transactions of which I had no immediate knowledge, and of which I am not a competent judge; and, at any rate, no testimony of mine could increase the value of praise from so able and so impartial a hand. Of one quality, however, ascribed to Dr. Robertson by his colleague,—his ability in debate,—I may be allowed to express my own opinion; as I was often led by curiosity, in my early years, to witness the proceedings of the court where it was principally displayed; and which, since the union of the kingdoms, is all that exists in Scotland to preserve the semblance of popular deliberation. This part of his fame will soon rest on tradition only; but by many who are still able to judge from their own recollection, I shall not be accused of exaggeration, when I say, that in *some* of the most essential qualifications of a speaker, he was entitled to rank with the first names which have, in our times, adorned the British Senate.—Nor was the opposition with which he had to contend unworthy of his exertions; formidable as it

* Discourses, &c. by John Erskine, D.D. p. 271.

long was in zeal and numbers, and aided by a combination of talents which will not easily be equalled; the copious and fervid declamation of *Crosbie*; the classical, argumentative, and commanding eloquence of *Dick*; and the powerful, though coarse, invective of *Freebairn*, whose name would, in a different age, have been transmitted to posterity with those of the rustic and intrepid apostles who freed their country from the hierarchy of Rome*.

The characteristic of Dr. Robertson's eloquence was *persuasion*;—mild, rational, and conciliating, yet manly and dignified. In early life, when forced as a partisan to expose himself to the contentious heat of popular discussion, he is said to have been distinguished by promptitude and animation in repelling the attacks which he occasionally encountered; but long before the period during which I knew him, he had become the acknowledged head of his party, and generally spoke last in the debate; resuming the arguments on both sides with such perspicuity of arrangement and expression, such respect to his antagonists, and such an air of candour and earnestness in every thing he said, that he often united the suffrages of the House in favour of the conclusions he wished to establish.

His pronunciation and accents were strongly marked with the peculiarities of his country; nor was this defect compensated by the graces of his delivery. His manner, however, though deficient

* Andrew Crosbie, Esq. Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Advocates. Robert Dick, D.D. one of the Ministers of Edinburgh. The Rev. Mr. Freebairn, Minister of Dumbarton. All of them died many years before Dr. Robertson.

in ease, was interesting and impressive; and had something in its general effect, neither unsuitable to his professional station, nor to the particular style of his eloquence. His diction was rich and splendid, and abounded with the same beauties that characterise his writings.

In these details with respect to his ecclesiastical politics, I may perhaps be thought by some to have been more circumstantial than was necessary; but, as he himself always dwelt on that subject with peculiar satisfaction, I could not pass it over more slightly than I have done. Nor is it so foreign, as it may at first appear, to his character as an Historian; for, narrow and obscure as his field of action was, it afforded him a closer view than most authors have enjoyed, of the intrigues of contending factions; and an opportunity of studying, though on a scale comparatively small, the passions that decide the fate of nations. In tracing, accordingly, the springs of human conduct, his sagacity is strongly impressed with that knowledge of the world, which experience alone can communicate; and, even in those characteristical portraits, on which he has lavished all the decorations of his style, he is seldom if ever misled, either by the affectation of eloquence, or of metaphysical refinement, from a faithful adherence to truth and nature.

I would willingly enlarge on his merits in a different department of his professional employments, of which I am more competent to judge from personal knowledge, were I not afraid, that my own academical habits might lead me to attach an interest to what would appear of little moment to

others. I shall therefore only remark, in general, his assiduous attention, amidst his various occupations, both speculative and active, to the minutest duties of his office as Head of the University; duties, which nothing but his habits of arrangement, and the severest œconomy of his time, could have enabled him to discharge with so little appearance of hurry or inconvenience. The valuable accession of books which the public library received while under his administration, was chiefly owing to his prudent and exact application of the very slender funds appropriated to that establishment; the various societies, both literary and medical, which, in this place, have long contributed so essentially to the improvement of the rising generation, were, most of them, either planned or reformed under his direction and patronage: and if, as a seat of learning, Edinburgh has, of late more than formerly, attracted the notice of the world, much must be ascribed to the influence of his example, and to the lustre of his name. The good sense, temper, and address, with which he presided for thirty years in our University meetings, were attended with effects no less essential to our prosperity; and are attested by a fact which is perhaps without a parallel in the annals of any other literary community, That during the whole of that period there did not occur a single question which was not terminated by an unanimous decision.

In consequence of the various connexions with society, which arose from these professional duties; and from the interest which he was led to take, both by his official situation, and the activity of his pub-

lic spirit, in the literary or the patriotic undertakings of others*, a considerable portion of Dr. Robertson's leisure was devoted to conversation and company. No man enjoyed these with more relish; and few have possessed the same talents to add to their attractions.

A rich stock of miscellaneous information, acquired from books and from an extensive intercourse with the world, together with a perfect acquaintance at all times with the topics of the day, and the soundest sagacity and good sense applied to the occurrences of common life, rendered him the most agreeable and instructive of companions. He seldom aimed at wit; but, with his intimate friends, he often indulged a sportive and fanciful species of humour. He delighted in good-natured, characteristical anecdotes of his acquaintance, and added powerfully to their effect by his own enjoyment in relating them. He was, in a remarkable degree, susceptible of the ludicrous: but on no occasion did he forget the dignity of his character, or the decorum of his profession; nor did he even lose sight of that classical taste which adorned his compositions. His turn of expression was correct and pure; sometimes, perhaps, inclining more than is expected, in the carelessness of a social hour, to formal and artificial periods; but it was stamped with his own manner no less than his premeditated style: it was always the language of a superior and a cultivated mind, and it embellished every subject on which he spoke. In the company of strangers,

* See Appendix to the Life, Note O.

he increased his exertions to amuse and to inform; and the splendid variety of his conversation was commonly the chief circumstance on which they dwelt in enumerating his talents;—and yet, I must acknowledge, for my own part, that much as I always admired his powers when they were thus called forth, I enjoyed his society less, than when I saw him in the circle of his intimates, or in the bosom of his family.

It only now remains for me to mention his exemplary diligence in the discharge of his pastoral duties; a diligence which, instead of relaxing as he advanced in life, became more conspicuous when his growing infirmities withdrew him from business, and lessened the number of his active engagements. As long as his health allowed him, he preached regularly every Sunday; and he continued to do so occasionally, till within a few months of his death.

The particular style of his pulpit eloquence may be judged of from the specimen which has been long in the hands of the public; and it is not improbable, that the world might have been favoured with others of equal excellence, if he had not lost, before his removal from Gladsmuir, a volume of sermons which he had composed with care. The facility with which he could arrange his ideas, added to the correctness and fluency of his extemporary language, encouraged him to lay aside the practice of writing, excepting on extraordinary occasions; and to content himself, in general, with such short notes as might recall to his memory the principal topics on which he meant to enlarge. To

the value, however, and utility of these unpremeditated sermons we have the honourable testimony of his learned and excellent colleague, who heard him preach every week for more than twenty years. "His discourses from this place," says Dr. Erskine, "were so plain, that the most illiterate might easily "understand them, and yet so correct and elegant "that they could not incur their censure, whose "taste was more refined. For several years before "his death, he seldom wrote his sermons fully, or "exactly committed his older sermons to memory; "though, had I not learned this from himself, I "should not have suspected it; such was the va-"riety and fitness of his illustrations, the accuracy "of his method, and the propriety of his style."

His health began apparently to decline in the end of the year 1791. Till then, it had been more uniformly good, than might have been expected from his studious habits; but about this period he suddenly discovered strong symptoms of jaundice, which gradually undermined his constitution, and terminated at length in a lingering and fatal illness. He had the prospect of death long before him; a prospect deeply afflicting to his family and his friends; but of which, without any visible abatement in his spirits, he happily availed himself, to adorn the doctrines which he had long taught, by an example of fortitude and of Christian resignation. In the concluding stage of his disorder, he removed from Edinburgh to *Grange House*, in the neighbourhood, where he had the advantage of a freer air, and a more quiet situation, and (what he valued more than most men) the pleasure of

rural objects, and of a beautiful landscape. While he was able to walk abroad, he commonly passed a part of the day in a small garden, enjoying the simple gratifications it afforded with all his wonted relish. Some who now hear me will long remember,—among the trivial yet interesting incidents which marked these last weeks of his memorable life,—his daily visits to the fruit-trees (which were then in blossom), and the smile with which he, more than once, contrasted the interest he took in their progress, with the event which was to happen before their maturity. At his particular desire, I saw him (for the last time) on the 4th of June, 1793, when his weakness confined him to his couch, and his articulation was already beginning to fail: and it is in obedience to a request with which he then honoured me, that I have ventured, without consulting my own powers, to offer this tribute to his memory. He died on the 11th of the same month, in the 71st year of his age.

I have already hinted at his domestic happiness. Nothing was wanting to render it perfect while he lived; and, at his death, he had the satisfaction to leave, in prosperous circumstances, a numerous family, united to each other and to their excellent mother by the tenderest affection. His eldest son, an eminent lawyer at the Scotch bar, has been only prevented by the engagements of an active profession, from sustaining his father's literary name; while his two younger sons, both of whom very early embraced a military life, have carried his vigour and enterprise into a different career of ambi-

tion*. His eldest daughter is married to Mr. Brydone, the well-known author of one of our most elegant and popular books of Travels. Another is the widow of the late John Russel, Esq. Clerk to the Signet, and one of the members of this Society.

The general view which has been already given of Dr. Robertson's occupations and habits, supersedes the necessity of attempting a formal delineation of his character. To the particulars, however, which have been incidentally mentioned in the course of this biographical sketch, it may not be unimportant to add, that the same sagacity and good sense, which so eminently distinguished him as a Writer, guided his conduct in life, and rendered his counsels of inestimable value to his friends. He was not forward in offering advice; but when consulted, as he was very frequently, by his younger acquaintance, he entered into their concerns with the most lively interest, and seemed to have a pleasure and a pride in imparting to them all the lights of his experience and wisdom. Good sense was indeed the most prominent feature in his intellectual character; and it is unquestionably, of all the qualities of the understanding, that which essentially constitutes superiority of mind: for, although we are sometimes apt to appropriate the appellation of genius to certain peculiarities in the intellectual habits, it is he only who distinguishes himself from the rest of mankind, by thinking better than they on the same subject, who fairly brings his powers

* See Appendix to the Life, Note P.

into comparison with others. This was in a remarkable degree the case with Dr. Robertson. He was not eminent for metaphysical acuteness: nor did he easily enter into speculations involving mathematical or mechanical ideas; but, in those endowments which lay the foundation of successful conduct, and which fit a man to acquire an influence over others, he had no superior. Among those who have, like him, devoted the greater part of life to study, perhaps it would be difficult to find his equal.

His practical acquaintance with human nature was great, and he possessed the soundest and most accurate notions of the characters of those with whom he was accustomed to associate. In that quick penetration, indeed, which reads the soul, and estimates the talents of others by a sort of intuition, he was surpassed by many; and I have often known him misled by first impressions: but where he had an opportunity of continuing his observations for a length of time, he seldom failed in forming conclusions equally just, refined, and profound. In a general knowledge of the world, and of the ways of men, his superiority was striking and indisputable; still more so, in my opinion, than in the judgments he formed of individuals. Nor is this surprising, when we consider the joint influence of his habits as an historian, and as a political leader.

Too much cannot be said of his moral qualities. Exemplary and amiable in the offices of private life, he exhibited in his public conduct a rare union of political firmness with candour and moderation.

—" He enjoyed," says Dr. Erskine, "the bounties " of Providence without running into riot; was " temperate without austerity; condescending and " affable without meanness; and in expense nei- " ther sordid nor prodigal. He could feel an in- " jury, and yet bridle his passion; was grave, not " sullen; steady, not obstinate; friendly, not offi- " cious; prudent and cautious, not timid."—The praise is liberal; and it is expressed with the cordial warmth of friendship; but it comes from one who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth, as he had enjoyed Dr. Robertson's intimacy from his childhood, and was afterwards, for more than twenty years, his colleague in the same church; while his zealous attachment to a different system of ecclesiastical government, though it never impaired his affection for the companion of his youth, exempts him from any suspicion of undue partiality.

In point of stature Dr. Robertson was rather above the middle size; and his form, though it did not convey the idea of much activity, announced vigour of body and a healthful constitution. His features were regular and manly; and his eye spoke at once good sense and good humour. He appeared to greatest advantage in his complete clerical dress; and was more remarkable for gravity and dignity in discharging the functions of his public stations, than for ease or grace in private society. His portrait by Reynolds, painted about twenty years ago, is an admirable likeness; and fortunately, (for the colours are already much faded,) all its

spirit is preserved in an excellent mezzotinto. At the request of his colleagues in the University*, who were anxious to have some memorial of him placed in the public library, he sat again, a few months before his death, to Mr. Raeburn; at a time when his altered and sickly aspect rendered the task of the artist peculiarly difficult. The picture, however, is not only worthy, in every respect, of Mr. Raeburn's high and deserved reputation, but, to those who were accustomed to see Dr. Robertson at this interesting period, derives an additional value from an air of languor and feebleness, which strongly marked his appearance during his long decline.

I should feel myself happy, if, in concluding this memoir, I could indulge the hope, that it may be the means of completing and finishing that picture which his writings exhibit of his mind. In attempting to delineate its characteristic features, I have certainly possessed one advantage,—that I had long an opportunity of knowing and studying the original; and that my portrait, such as it is, is correctly copied from my own impressions. I am sensible, at the same time, that much more might have been accomplished by a writer whose pursuits were more congenial than mine to Dr. Robertson's: nor would any thing have induced me to depart, so far as I have now done, from the ordinary course of my own studies, but my respect for the last wish of a much lamented friend, expressed at a moment when nothing remained for me but silent acquiescence.

* See Appendix to the Life, Note Q.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. p. 10.

THE information contained in the following note (for which I am indebted to the friendship of Dr. Carlyle) cannot fail to be acceptable to those to whom the Literary History of Scotland is an object of curiosity.

"The *Select Society* owed its rise to the ingenious Allan "Ramsay, (son of the poet of that name,) and was intended "for Philosophical Inquiry, and the improvement of the "Members in the Art of Speaking. They met for the "first time in the Advocates' Library, in May 1754, and "consisted only of fifteen, who had been nominated and "called together by Mr. Ramsay and two or three of his "friends. At that meeting they formed themselves into "a society, into which the Members were ever after "elected by ballot, and who met regularly every Friday "evening, during the sittings of the Court of Session, "both in summer and winter.

"This Society continued to flourish for several years, "and became so fashionable that, in 1759, their number "amounted to more than 130; which included all the "*Literati* of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, and many "of the Nobility and Gentry, who, though a few of them "only took any share in the debates, thought themselves "so well entertained, and instructed, that they gave "punctual attendance. In this Society, which remained "in vigour for six or seven years, Dr. Robertson made a "conspicuous figure. By his means it was, and by the "appearances made by a few of his brethren, that a new "lustre was thrown on their order. From the Revolu-

" tion, (when the Church had been chiefly filled with in-
" cumbents that were ill-educated,) down to this period,
" the Clergy of the Established Church had always been
" considered in a subordinate light, and as far inferior to
" the Members of the other learned Professions, in know-
" ledge and liberal views. But now, when compared
" together, on this theatre for the exhibition of talents,
" they were found to be entitled to at least an equal share
" of praise; and having been long depressed, they were,
" in compensation, as usual, raised full as high as they
" deserved. When the Select Society commenced, it
" was not foreseen that the History of Scotland during
" the reign of Mary, the Tragedy of Douglas, and the
" Epigoniad, were to issue so soon from three Gentlemen
" of the Ecclesiastical Order.

" When the Society was on the decline, by the avo-
" cations of many of its most distinguished members, and
" the natural abatement of that ardour which is excited by
" novelty and emulation, it was thought proper to elect
" fixed presidents to preside in their turns, whose duty it
" was to open the question to be debated upon, that a
" fair field might be laid before the Speakers. It was
" observed of Dr. Robertson, who was one of those Pre-
" sidents, that whereas most of the others in their pre-
" vious discourses exhausted the subject so much that
" there was no room for debate, he gave only such brief
" but artful sketches, as served to suggest ideas, without
" leading to a decision.

" Among the most distinguished Speakers in the Select
" Society were Sir Gilbert Elliott, Mr. Wedderburn,
" Mr. Andrew Pringle, Lord Kaims, Mr. Walter Stewart,
" Lord Elibank, and Dr. Robertson. The Honourable
" Charles Townshend spoke once. David Hume and
" Adam Smith never opened their lips.

" The Society was also much obliged to Dr. Alexan-
" der Monro, senior, Sir Alexander Dick, and Mr.

"Patrick Murray, Advocate, who, by their constant attendance and readiness on every subject, supported the debate during the first year of the establishment, when otherwise it would have gone heavily on. The same part was afterwards more ably performed by Lord Monboddo, Lord Elibank, and the Reverend William Wilkie, all of whom had the peculiar talent of supporting their paradoxical talents by an inexhaustible fund of humour and argument."

A printed List of the Members having been accidentally preserved by Dr. Carlyle, I need make no apology for giving it a place in this Appendix, as a memorial of the state of Literary Society in Edinburgh forty years ago.

LIST of the MEMBERS of the SELECT SOCIETY, 17th October, 1759.

Rev. John Jardine, Minister in Edinburgh.
Francis Home, M.D.
Adam Smith, Professor of Ethics at Glasgow.
Alex. Wedderburn (now Lord Chancellor).
Allan Ramsay (afterwards Painter to His Majesty).
James Burnet, Advocate (afterwards Lord Monboddo).
John Campbell, Advocate (now Lord Stonefield).
Rev. Alex. Carlyle, Minister at Inveresk.
William Johnston, Advocate (now Sir William Pulteney).
James Stevenson Rogers, Advocate.
David Hume.
John Swinton, Advocate (afterwards Lord Swinton).
Patrick Murray, Advocate.
Patrick Hume of Billy, Advocate.
Alex. Stevenson, M.D.
Walter Stewart, Advocate.
John Home (Author of Douglas).
Robert Alexander, Merchant.
James Russell (afterwards Professor of Nat. Philosophy).
George Cockburn, Advocate.
David Clerk, M.D.
George Brown (Lord Colston).
Rev. Will. Robertson, Minister in Edinburgh.
John Fletcher (now General Fletcher Campbell).
Alex. Agnew, Advocate.

John Hope, M.D.
Sir David Dalrymple, Advocate (afterwards Lord Hailes).
Gilbert Elliott, one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.
Sir Harry Erskine, Bart.
Rev. Hugh Blair, one of the Ministers of Edinburgh.
Andrew Stewart (now M.P. for Weymouth).
Charles Fysch Palmer.
George Morrison, Advocate.
Andrew Pringle (Lord Aylmoor).
Alex. Monro, sen. M.D.
David Ross, Advocate (now Lord Ankerville).
Right Hon. Patrick Lord Elibank.
Earl of Glasgow.
Sir Alex. Dick, Bart.
Robert Arbuthnot (now Secretary to the Board of Trustees for Manufactures, &c.)
Adam Fairholme, Merchant in Edinburgh.
Major James Edmonstone.
Charles Hamilton Gordon, Advocate.
James Fergusson of Pitfour, jun. Advocate.
David Kennedy, Advocate (afterwards Earl of Cassils).
John Dalrymple, Advocate (now Baron of Exchequer).
Major Robert Murray (afterwards Sir Robert Murray).
Rev. Rob. Wallace, Minister in Edinburgh.
John Gordon, Advocate.
Alex. Maxwell, Merchant in Edinburgh.
John Coutts, Merchant in Edinburgh.
Will. Todd, Merchant in Edinburgh.
Tho. Millar (afterwards President of the Court of Session).
Robert Chalmers.
Mr. Baron Grant.
Captain James Stewart.
Sir John Stewart, Advocate.
James Guthrie, Merchant.
Charles Congalton, Surgeon in Edinburgh.
Rev. Will. Wilkie, Minister at Ratho.
John Monro, Advocate.
Captain Robert Douglas.
Alex. Tait, writer in Edinburgh.
George Chalmers, Merchant in Edinburgh.
Colonel Oughton (afterwards Sir Adolphus Oughton).
John Adam, Architect.
Robert White, M.D.
Henry Home (Lord Kaims).
James Montgomery, Advocate (now Chief Baron of Exchequer).

David Dalrymple, Advocate (afterwards Lord Westhall).
Rev. George Kay, Minister in Edinburgh.
George Muir, Clerk of Justiciary.
George Clerk (afterwards Sir George Clerk).
Lieut. Col. Archibald Montgomery (afterwards Earl of Eglinton).
Right Honourable Lord Deskfoord.
Robert Berry, Advocate.
Adam Austin, M.D.
Lieut. Col. Morgan.
George Drummond (Lord Provost of Edinburgh).
The Earl of Lauderdale.
Alex. Boswell (Lord Auchinleck).
Alex. Udney, Commissioner of Excise.
Rev. George Wishart, Minister in Edinburgh.
Right Honourable Lord Belhaven.
Francis Garden, Advocate (afterwards Lord Gardenstone).
David Rae, Advocate (now Lord Justice Clerk).
Mansfield Cardonnel, Commissioner of Excise.
Right Hon. Lord Aberdour.
John Murray of Philiphaugh, Advocate.
Will. Tytler, Writer to the Signet (Author of the Vindication of Queen Mary).
Colin Drummond, M.D.
Robert Dundas (afterwards President of the Court of Session).
Stamp Brooksbanks.
Wm. Nairne, Advocate (now Lord Dunsinan).
James Adam, Architect.
Captain Charles Erskine.
Hugh Dalrymple, Advocate (Author of Rodondo).
James Hay, Surgeon.
Mr. Baron Erskine (afterwards Lord Alva).
John Clerk (Author of Naval Tactics).
John Mac Gowan, jun. Writer in Edinburgh.
Earl of Galloway.
John Graham of Dougaldston.
James Carmichael, Writer to the Signet.
Adam Fergusson (afterwards Professor of Moral Philosophy).
George Drummond of Blair.
Will. Cullen, M. D.
Ilay Campbell, Advocate (now President of the Court of Session).
Alex. Murray, Advocate (afterwards Lord Henderland).
Rev. Robert Dick.
Right Honourable Lord Gray.
Earl of Errol.

James Dewar, Advocate.
Captain David Wedderburn.
Major James Dalrymple.
Archibald Hamilton, M. D.
Andrew Cheap.
Andrew Crosbie, Advocate.
Earl of Aboyne.
Adam Fergusson, Advocate (now Sir Adam Fergusson).
Earl of Selkirk.
John Turton.
Cosmo Gordon (afterwards one of the Barons of Exchequer).
Right Hon. Lord Gairlies.
Earl of Sutherland.
Captain Dougald Campbell.
Honourable George Ramsay, Advocate.
Earl of Roseberry.
Earl of Cassils.
William Graham, Advocate.
John Pringle of Crichton.
Right Hon. Cha. Townshend.
George Wallace.

NOTE B. p. 18.

From WILLIAM STRAHAN, *Esq. to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Rev. Sir, London, Feb. 28, 1759.

WHEN I received your farewell letter on the conclusion of your History, I was determined not to answer it till I could tell you, with certainty, and from my own personal knowledge, what reception it met with in this place. And what I am going to tell you, I dare say you have had from many of your friends, long ago. No matter for that. Every man, and especially one in my way, has an opportunity to hear the public sentiments through many different channels. I have now waited till I could be fully informed; and as I have been particularly solicitous to procure authentic intelligence, you will not be displeased at my confirming what you have heard before, as we love to see a piece of good news in the Gazette (excuse the vanity of the comparison) even though we have read it a month before in all the other papers.—I don't remember to have heard any book so universally approved by the best judges, for what are sold yet, have been only to such. The people in the country know nothing of it, unless from the advertisements; and *a History of Scotland* is no very enticing title. —But many of the first distinction in town have perused

it with great satisfaction. They wonder how a Scotch parson, and who had never been out of Scotland, could be able to write in so correct, so clear, so manly, and so nervous a style. The Speaker of the House of Commons, in particular, prefers the style to that of Bolingbroke, and every body that I have either seen or heard of, thinks it one of the very best performances that has been exhibited for many years. As these are not superficial judges, you may be assured that the fame you have acquired will be permanent, and not only permanent, but extending daily. Next week you will see some extracts from it in the Chronicle, which will serve to give the people at a distance from town some idea of its excellence; but without that, or any thing else, the report of those who have read it in London, will soon spread its reputation; for the capital always gives the lead this way as well as in most other cases. The impression, therefore, certainly will be gone before another can be got ready. Mr. Millar has wrote to you already about revising it for another edition, and I think the sooner you send up some of the sheets, the better, that no time may be lost. Does not this answer your most sanguine expectations? For, indeed, a more favourable reception could not be hoped for. I most sincerely wish you joy of your success, and have not the least doubt but it will have all the good effects upon your future fortune which you could possibly hope for, or expect. Much depended upon the first performance; that trial is now happily over, and henceforth you will sail with a favourable gale. In truth, to acquire such a flood of reputation from writing on a subject in itself so unpopular in this country, is neither a common nor a contemptible conquest.—I will not trouble you more on a subject of which you must needs have heard a great deal from hence lately. I rejoice in your good fortune, and am with much esteem and sincerity, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

WILL. STRAHAN.

The following Letter from Mr. Strahan's son, forms an interesting counterpart to the foregoing article.

From ANDREW STRAHAN, *Esq. to* DR. ROBERTSON.

Dear Sir, London, 19th November, 1792.

BEING at the sea-side in Sussex, when I received your favour of the 26th ult. I have had no opportunity till now of acknowledging it, and at the same time informing myself of the state of the Edition, so as to answer your question.

Mr. Cadell (who is now with me, and who desires to be affectionately remembered) is of opinion with me, that we should take the ensuing season of ships sailing to India to reduce the quartos.—But we will print an edition in octavo, next summer, whatever may then be the state of the former, and we will thank you for a correct copy at your leisure.

The fourteenth Edition of your "*Scotland*" will be published in the course of the winter, during which it is our intention to advertise all your works strongly in all the papers.—And we have the satisfaction of informing you that, if we may judge by the sale of your writings, your literary reputation is daily increasing.

I am with much esteem, &c.

NOTE C. p. 23.

The praise contained in the following letter (though less profusely bestowed than by some other of Dr. Robertson's correspondents) will not appear of small value to those who are acquainted with the character of the writer, and with his accurate researches into the antiquities of Scotland.

From Sir DAVID DALRYMPLE *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Dear Sir, Edinburgh, 20th Feb. 1776.

I AM very happy in your favourable acceptance of the Annals of Scotland. Even your opinion is not enough to

make me think of going beyond the Restoration of James I. Your Sketch of the History from that time to the death of James V. is of itself sufficient to deter me. It is very possible that in your delineation of the history of the five Jameses, there may be errors and omissions; but you have drawn all the characters with such historical truth, that if I were to work on the same ground, I might spoil and over-charge the canvas; at the same time, the reader would not see himself in a strange country—every object would be familiar to him. There is another reason, and that is a political one, for my stopping short. Many readers might take it for granted that I would write disfavourably of the Stewarts, from prejudice of education or family. Other readers might suspect my impartiality; and thus, there would be little prospect of my being favourably heard. If I have health to finish my plan, I propose to go back into the laws of Scotland. *That* is a work of which I must not lose sight after I have laboured so long upon it*.

I send you a book which I have re-published, and beg your acceptance of it. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient

and obliged humble servant,

DAV. DALRYMPLE.

THE following Letters, which have been kindly communicated to me by a friend of Lord Hailes, ascertain some important dates with respect to the progress of Dr. Robertson's studies:

* It is much to be regretted that the work here alluded to by Lord Hailes was never carried into complete execution. The fragments, however, of such a writer relative to a subject on which he had so long bestowed attention, could not fail to be of great value; and it is to be hoped that they will one day be communicated to the public.

Dr. ROBERTSON *to* Lord HAILES.

Sir, Gladsmuir, 22d Oct. 1753.

I INTEND to employ some of the idle time of this winter in making a more diligent inquiry than ever I have done into that period of Scots History from the death of King James V. to the death of Queen Mary. I have the more common histories of that time, such as Buchanan, Spottiswood, and Knox; but there are several collections of papers by Anderson, Jebb, Forbes, and others, which I know not how to come at. I am persuaded you have most of these books in your library, and I flatter myself you will be so good as to allow me the use of them. You know better what books to send me, and what will be necessary to give any light to this part of the history, than I do what to ask, and therefore I leave the particular books to your own choice, which you'll please order to be given to my servant. Whatever you send me shall be used with much care, and returned with great punctuality.—I beg you may forgive this trouble. I am, with great respect, &c.

Dr. ROBERTSON *to* Lord HAILES.

Sir, Gladsmuir, 26th July, 1757.

I HAVE now got forward to the year 1660, and as it will be impossible for me to steer through Gowrie's conspiracy without your guidance, I must take advantage of the friendly offer you was pleased to make me, and apply to you for such books and papers as you think to be necessary for my purpose.—I would wish to give an accurate and rational account of the matter, but not very minute. I have in my possession Calderwood's MSS. and all the common printed histories; but I have neither Lord Cromarty's account, nor any other piece particularly relative to the conspiracy. I beg you may supply me with as

many as you can, and direct me to any thing you think may be useful. The papers you are pleased to communicate to me, shall be shown to no human creature, and no farther use shall be made of them than you permit. My servant will take great care of whatever books or papers you give him. I need not say how sensible I am of the good will with which you are pleased to instruct me in this curious point of history, nor how much I expect to profit by it. I ever am, &c.

Dr. ROBERTSON *to* Lord HAILES.

Sir, Edinburgh, 8th Nov. 1758.

I HAVE taken the liberty to send you inclosed a Preface to my book, which I have just now written. I find it very difficult for a man to speak of himself with any decency through three or four pages. Unluckily I have been obliged to write it in the utmost hurry, as Strahan is clamouring for it. I think it was necessary to say all in it that I have said, and yet it looks too like a puff. I send it to you, not only that you may do me the favour to correct any inaccuracies in the composition, but because there is a paragraph in it which I would not presume to publish without your permission, though I have taken care to word it so modestly that a man might have said it of himself. As I must send off the Preface by to-morrow's post, I must beg the favour that you will return it with your remarks to-morrow morning. I would wish, if possible, that I had time to show it to Blair. I am, with great respect, &c.

THE Letters which follow (although written many years afterwards) may, without impropriety, be introduced here, as they all relate, more or less, to the History of Scotland.

Dr. ROBERTSON *to* Lord HAILES.

My Lord, College, Feb. 10, 1776.

I HOPE Your Lordship will forgive me for having deferred so long to return you my best thanks for the very acceptable present which you were pleased to send me. Previous to doing this, I wished to have the satisfaction of perusing the Annals again, and the opinion I had formed of their merit, is in no degree diminished by an attentive review of them in their present dress.

You have given authenticity and order to a period of our History, which has hitherto been destitute of both, and a Scotchman has now the pleasure of being able to pronounce what is true, and what is fabulous, in the early part of our national story. As I have no doubt with respect to the reception which this part of the Annals, though perhaps the least interesting, will meet with, I flatter myself that Your Lordship will go on with the work. Allow me, on the public account, to hope that you have not fixed *the Accession of James I.* as an impassable boundary beyond which you are not to advance. It is at that period, the most interesting age of our history commences. From thence the regular series of our laws begins. During the reign of the Jameses, many things still require the investigation of such an accurate and patient inquirer as Your Lordship. I hope that what I have done in my review of that period, will be no restraint on Your Lordship in entering upon that field. My view of it was a general one, that did not require the minute accuracy of a chronological research; and if you discover either omissions or mistakes in it, (and I dare say you will discover both,) I have no objection to your supplying the one and correcting the other. Your strictures on me will not be made with a hostile hand, and I had much rather that these were made, than be deprived of the advantage that I shall reap from your completing your work.

As far as I can judge by the opinion of those with whom I converse, the public wish is, that you should continue your Annals at least to the death of James V. I most heartily join my voice to this general desire, and wish you health to go on with what will be so much for the honour of your country. I am, with great truth and respect, My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient
and most humble servant.

Dr. ROBERTSON *to* Lord HAILES.

My Lord, College, March 13th, 1786.

WHEN I took the liberty of applying to Yord Lordship last week, I unluckily did not advert to the hurry of business during the last week of the Session. In compliance with your request, I shall, without preamble or apology, mention what induced me to trouble Your Lordship.

I am now in the twenty-eighth year of my authorship, and the proprietors of the History of Scotland purpose to end the second fourteen years of their copyright splendidly, by publishing two new editions of that Book, one in quarto, and another in octavo. This has induced me to make a general review of the whole work, and to avail myself both of the remarks of my friends, and the strictures of those who differ from me in opinion. I mean not to take the field as a controversial writer, or to state myself in opposition to any antagonist. Wherever I am satisfied that I have fallen into error, I shall quietly, and without reluctance, correct it. Wherever I think my sentiments right and well established, they shall stand.—In some few places, I shall illustrate what I have written, by materials and facts which I have discovered since the first publication of my book. These additions will not, I hope, be very bulky; but they will contribute, as I ima-

gine, to throw light on several events which have been mistaken, or misrepresented. I shall take care, on account of the purchasers of former editions, that all the additions and alterations of any importance shall be published separately, both in quarto and octavo.

As I know how thoroughly Your Lordship is acquainted with every transaction in Q. Mary's reign, and with how much accuracy you are accustomed to examine historical facts, it was my intention to have requested of you, that if any error or omission in my book had occurred to you in the perusal of it, you would be so obliging as to communicate your sentiments to me. I shall certainly receive such communications with much attention and gratitude. —You have set me right with respect to the Act 19th April, 1567; but I think that I can satisfy Your Lordship that it was esteemed in that age, and was really, a concession of greater importance to the reformed than you seem to apprehend. I beg leave to desire that, if you have any remarks to communicate, they may be sent soon, as the Booksellers are impatient. I trust Your Lordship will pardon the liberty I have taken. I have the honour to be, My Lord,

Your most obedient and most humble servant.

Dr. ROBERTSON *to* Lord HAILES.

College of Edinburgh,
March 20, 1786.

My Lord,

I CONSIDER it as an unfortunate accident for me, that Your Lordship happened to be so much pre-occupied at the time when I took the liberty of applying to you. I return you thanks for the communication of your notes on the acts of parliament. Besides the entertainment and instruction I received from the perusal of them, I found some things of use to me, and I have availed myself of the permission you was pleased to give me.

I mentioned to Your Lordship that I differed little from you about the effect of the act, April 19, 1567. I inclose a copy both of the *text*, corrected as I intended to publish it in the new edition, and of a note which I shall add to explain my idea of the import of the act. I request of Your Lordship to peruse it, and if in any part it meets not with your approbation, be so good as to let me know. Please to return it as soon as you can, that I may communicate it, and any other additions and alterations, to Mr. Davidson, who has promised to revise them.

In 1776 Your Lordship published the Secret Correspondence of Sir R. Cecil with James VI. I have not a copy of it, and have been unsuccessful in my application for one to some of my friends. If you have a copy, and will be so good as to allow me the use of it, I shall return it with the greatest care, as I do herewith the notes I received from Your Lordship. I have attended to the notes in Bannatyne's poems. I have the Hamilton MSS. in three volumes folio. They are curious.

I have the honour to be, &c.

I SHALL subjoin some extracts from Mr. Hume's letters to Dr. Robertson, written about this period, and a few other passages from different correspondents. They seem to me worthy of preservation, although the extraneous matter they contain render it impossible for me to incorporate them with my Narrative.

Mr. HUME *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

London, Lisle Street,
18th Nov. 1758.

My dear Sir,

ACCORDING to your permission I have always got your corrected sheets from Strahan; and am glad to find,

that we shall agree in almost all the material parts of our History. Your resolution to assert the authenticity of Mary's letter to Bothwell, with the consequence which must necessarily follow, removes the chief point in which, I apprehend, we shall differ. There remain however two other points where I have not the good fortune to agree with you, *viz.* The violation of the treaty of Perth by Mary of Guise, and the innocency of Mary with regard to Babington's conspiracy: but as I had written notes upon these passages, the public must judge between us. Only allow me to say, that even if you be in the right with regard to the last, (of which, notwithstanding my deference to your authority, I cannot perceive the least appearance,) you are certainly too short and abrupt in handling it. I believe you go contrary to received opinion; and the point was of consequence enough to merit a note or a dissertation.

There is still another point in which we differ, and which reduced me to great perplexity. You told me, that all historians had been mistaken with regard to James's behaviour on his mother's trial and execution; that he was not really the pious son he pretended to be; that the appearances which deceived the world, were put on at the solicitation of the French ambassador, Courcelles: and that I should find all this proved by a manuscript of Dr. Campbell's. I accordingly spoke of the matter to Dr. Campbell, who confirmed what you said, with many additions and amplifications. I desired to have the manuscript, which he sent me. But great was my surprise, when I found the contrary in every page, many praises bestowed on the King's piety both by Courcelles and the French court; his real grief and resentment painted in the strongest colours; resolutions even taken by him to form an alliance with Philip of Spain, in order to get revenge; repeated advices given him by Courcelles and the French ministers, rather to conceal his resentment till a

proper opportunity offered of taking vengeance. What most displeased me in this affair was, that as I thought myself obliged to follow the ordinary tenor of the printed historian, while you appealed to manuscript, it would be necessary for me to appeal to the same manuscripts to give extracts of them, and to oppose your conclusions. Though I know that I could execute this matter in a friendly and obliging manner for you, yet I own that I was very uneasy at finding myself under a necessity of observing any thing which might appear a mistake in your narration. But there came to me a man this morning, who, as I fancy, gave me the key of the difficulty, but without freeing me from my perplexity. This was a man commonly employed by Millar and Strahan to decypher manuscripts. He brought me a letter of yours to Strahan, where you desired him to apply to me in order to point out the passages proper to be inserted in your Appendix, and proper to prove the assertion of your text. You add there, these letters are in the French language. I immediately concluded that you had not read the manuscripts, but had taken it on Mr. Campbell's word: for the letters are in English translated by I know not whom from the French. I could do nothing on this occasion but desire Strahan to stop the press in printing the Appendix, and stay till I wrote to you. If I could persuade you to change the narration of the text, that sheet could be easily cancelled, and an Appendix formed proper to confirm an opposite account. If you still persist in your opinion, somebody else whom you trusted might be employed to find the proper passages; for I cannot find them.

There is only one passage which looks like your opinion, and which I shall transcribe to you. It is a relation of what passed between James and Courcelles upon the first rumour of the discovery of Babington's conspiracy, before James apprehended his mother to be in any danger. "The King said he loved his mother as much as

" nature and duty bound; but he could not love her :
" For he knew well she bore him no more good-will than
" she did to the Queen of England: That he had seen
" with his own eyes, before Foulnaye's departure out of
" Scotland, a letter to him, whereby she sent him word,
" that if he would not conform himself to her will, and
" follow her counsels and advice, that he should content
" himself with the lordship of Darnley, which was all that
" appertained unto him by his father: Farther, that he
" had seen other letters under her own hand, confirming
" her evil towards him: Besides, that she had oftentimes
" gone about to make a regency in Scotland, and to put
" him besides the crown; that it behoved him to think of
" his own affairs, and that he thought the Queen of En-
" gland would attempt nothing against her person with-
" out making him acquainted: That his mother was
" henceforward to carry herself both towards him and
" the Queen of England after another sort, without bend-
" ing any more upon such practices and intelligences as
" she had in former times: That he hoped to set such
" persons about her as" (Here the manuscript is not farther legible.) But though such were James's sentiments before he apprehended his mother to be in danger, he adopted a directly opposite conduct afterwards, as I told you. I can only express my wishes that you may see reason to conform your narrative in vol. ii. p. 139, 140, to this account, or omit that Appendix altogether, or find some other person who can better execute your intentions than it is possible for me to do.

Mr. HUME *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

My dear Sir, 25th January, 1759.

WHAT I wrote you with regard to Mary's concurrence in the conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth, was from the printed histories of papers; and nothing ever

appeared to me more evident. Your chief objection, I see, is derived from one circumstance, that neither the secretaries nor conspirators were confronted with Mary; but you must consider that the law did not then require this confrontation, and it was in no case the practice. The crown could not well grant it in one case without granting it in all, because the refusing of it would then have been a strong presumption of innocence in the prisoner. Yet as Mary's was an extraordinary case, Elizabeth was willing to have granted it. I find in Forbes's MS. papers, sent me by Lord Royston, a letter of hers to Burleigh and Walsingham, wherein she tells them, that, if they thought proper, they might carry down the two secretaries to Fotheringay, in order to confront them with her. But they reply, that they think it needless.

But I am now sorry to tell you, that by Murden's State Papers, which are printed, the matter is put beyond all question. I got these papers during the holidays by Dr. Birch's means; and as soon as I had read them, I ran to Millar, and desired him very earnestly to stop the publication of your History till I should write to you, and give you an opportunity of correcting a mistake of so great moment; but he absolutely refused compliance. He said that your book was now finished, that the copies would be shipped for Scotland in two days, that the whole narration of Mary's trial must be wrote over again; that this would require time, and it was uncertain whether the new narrative could be brought within the same compass with the old; that this change, he said, would require the cancelling a great many sheets; that there were scattered passages through the volumes founded on your theory, and these must also be all cancelled, and that this change required the new printing of a great part of the edition. For these reasons, which do not want force, he refused, after deliberation, to stop his publication, and I was obliged to acquiesce. Your best apology at present is,

that you could not possibly see the grounds of Mary's guilt, and every equitable person will excuse you.

I am sorry, on many accounts, that you did not see this Collection of Murden's. Among other curiosities, there are several instructions to H. Killigrew, dated 10th Sept. 1572. He was then sent into Scotland. It there appears, that the Regents, Murray and Lennox, had desired Mary to be put into their hands, in order to try her and put her to death. Elizabeth there offers to Regent Mar, to deliver her up, provided good security were given, "that she should receive that she hath deserved there by "order of Justice, whereby no further peril should ensue "by her escaping, or by setting her up again." It is probable, Mar refused compliance, for no steps were taken towards it.

I am nearly printed out, and shall be sure to send you a copy by the stage-coach, or some other conveyance. I beg of you to make remarks as you go along. It would have been much better had we communicated before printing, which was always my desire, and was most suitable to the friendship which always did, and I hope always will, subsist between us. I speak this chiefly on my own account. For though I had the perusal of your sheets before I printed, I was not able to derive sufficient benefits from them, or indeed to make any alteration by their assistance. There still remain, I fear, many errors, of which you could have convinced me, if we had canvassed the matter in conversation. Perhaps I might also have been sometimes no less fortunate with you. Particularly I could almost undertake to convince you, that the Earl of Murray's conduct with the Duke of Norfolk was no way dishonourable.

I have seen a copy of your History with Charles Stanhope. Lord Willoughby, who had been there reading some passages of it, said, that you was certainly mistaken with regard to the act passed in the last parliament of

Mary, settling the Reformation. He said that the act of Parliament the first of James was no proof of it: for though that statute contains a statute where the Queen's name was employed, yet that is always the case with the bills brought into Parliament, even though they receive not the Royal Assent, nor perhaps pass the Houses. I wish this be not the case, considering the testimony of Buchanan, Calderwood, and Spotswood. Besides, if the bill had before received the Royal Assent, what necessity of repeating it, or passing it again? Mary's title was more undisputable than James's.

Dr. Blair tells me, that Prince Edward is reading you, and is charmed. I hear the same of the Princess and Prince of Wales. But what will really give you pleasure, I lent my copy to Elliot during the holidays, who thinks it one of the finest performances he ever read; and though he expected much he finds more. He remarked, however, (which is also my opinion,) that in the beginning, before your pen was sufficiently accustomed to the historic style, you employed too many digressions and reflections. This was also somewhat my own case, which I have corrected in my new edition.

Millar was proposing to publish me about the middle of March, but I shall communicate to him your desire, even though I think it entirely groundless, as you will likewise think after you have read my volume. He has very needlessly delayed your publication till the first of February at the desire of the Edinburgh booksellers, who could no way be affected by a publication in London. I was exceedingly sorry not to be able to comply with your desire, when you expressed your wish, that I should not write this period. I could not write downward. For when you find occasion, by new discoveries, to correct your opinion with regard to facts which passed in Queen Elizabeth's days; who, that has not the best opportunities of informing himself, could venture to relate any recent

transactions? I must therefore have abandoned altogether this scheme of the English History, in which I had proceeded so far, if I had not acted as I did. You will see what light and force this History of the Tudors bestows on that of the Stewarts. Had I been prudent, I should have begun with it. I care not to boast, but I will venture to say, that I have now effectually stopped the mouths of all those villainous Whigs who railed at me.

You are so kind as to ask me about my coming down. I can yet answer nothing. I have the strangest reluctance to change places. I lived several years happy with my brother at Nine-wells, and had not his marriage changed a little the state of the family, I believe I should have lived and died there. I used every expedient to evade this journey to London, yet it is now uncertain whether I shall ever leave it. I have had some invitations, and some intentions of taking a trip to Paris; but I believe it will be safer for me not to go thither, for I might probably settle there for life. No one was ever endowed with so great a portion of the *vis inertiæ*. But as I live here very privately, and avoid as much as possible (and it is easily possible) all connexions with the great, I believe I should be better at Edinburgh. * * * * * * *

Mr. HUME *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

London, 8th Feb. 1759.

* * As to the *Age of Leo the Tenth*, it was Warton himself who intended to write it; but he has not wrote it, and probably never will. If I understand your hint, I should conjecture, that you had some thoughts of taking up the subject. But how can you acquire knowledge of the great works of sculpture, architecture, and painting, by which that age was chiefly distinguished? Are you versed in all the anecdotes of the Italian literature? These questions I heard proposed in a company of Literati when

I enquired concerning this design of Warton. They applied their remarks to that gentleman, who yet, they say, has travelled. I wish they do not all of them fall more fully on you. However you must not be idle. May I venture to suggest to you the Ancient History, particularly that of Greece? I think Rollin's success might encourage you, nor need you be the least intimidated by his merit. That author has no other merit but a certain facility and sweetness of narration, but has loaded his work with fifty puerilities.

Our friend, Wedderburn, is advancing with great strides in his profession. * * * * * *

I desire my compliments to Lord Elibank. I hope His Lordship has forgot his vow of answering us, and of washing Queen Mary white. I am afraid that is impossible; but His Lordship is well qualified to gild her.

I am, &c.

Mr. HUME *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

* * * * *

I FORGOT to tell you that two days ago I was in the House of Commons, where an English gentleman came to me, and told me, that he had lately sent to a grocer's shop for a pound of raisins, which he received wrapt up in a paper that he showed me. How would you have turned pale at the sight! It was a leaf of your History, and the very character of Queen Elizabeth, which you had laboured so finely, little thinking it would so soon come to so disgraceful an end.—I happened a little after to see Millar, and told him the story; consulting him, to be sure, on the fate of his new boasted Historian of whom he was so fond. But the story proves more serious than I apprehended. For he told Strahan, who thence suspects villainy among his prentices and journeymen; and has sent me very earnestly to know the gentleman's name, that he may find out

the grocer, and trace the matter to the bottom. In vain did I remonstrate that this was sooner or later the fate of all authors, *serius, ocyus, sors exitura.* He will not be satisfied; and begs me to keep my jokes for another occasion. But that I am resolved not to do; and therefore, being repulsed by his passion and seriousness, I direct them against you.

Next week I am published; and then I expect a constant comparison will be made between Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume. I shall tell you in a few weeks which of these heroes is likely to prevail. Meanwhile, I can inform both of them for their comforts, that their combat is not likely to make half so much noise as that between Broughton and the one-eyed coachman. *Vanitas vanitatum, atque omnia vanitas.* I shall still except, however, the friendship and good opinion of worthy men.

I am, &c.

Mr. HUME *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

My dear Sir, London, 12th March, 1759.

I BELIEVE I mentioned to you, a French gentleman, Monsieur Helvetius, whose book, De l'Esprit, was making a great noise in Europe. He is a very fine genius, and has the character of a very worthy man. My name is mentioned several times in his work with marks of esteem; and he has made me an offer, if I would translate his work into English, to translate a-new all my philosophical writings into French. He says, that none of them are well done, except that on the Natural History of Religion, by Monsieur Matigny, a counsellor of state. He added, that the Abbé Prevot, celebrated for the *Mémoires d'un Homme d'Honneur,* and other entertaining books, was just now translating my History. This account of Helvetius engaged me to send him over the new editions of all my writings; and I have added your History, which, I told

him, was here published with great applause; adding, that the subject was interesting and the execution masterly; and that it was probable some man of letters at Paris may think that a translation of it would be agreeable to the public. I thought that this was the best method of executing your intentions. I could not expect that any Frenchman here would be equal to the work. There is one Carracioli, who came to me and spoke of translating my new volume of History; but as he also mentioned his intentions of translating Smollet, I gave him no encouragement to proceed. The same reason would make me averse to see you in his hands.

But though I have given this character of your work to Monsieur Helvetius, I warn you, that this is the last time that, either to Frenchman or Englishman, I shall ever speak the least good of it. A plague take you! Here I sat near the historical summit of Parnassus, immediately under Dr. Smollet; and you have the impudence to squeeze yourself by me, and place yourself directly under his feet. Do you imagine that this can be agreeable to me? And must not I be guilty of great simplicity to contribute by my endeavours to your thrusting me out of my place in Paris as well as at London? But I give you warning that you will find the matter somewhat difficult, at least in the former city. A friend of mine, who is there, writes home to his father the strangest accounts on that head; which my modesty will not permit me to repeat, but which it allowed me very deliciously to swallow.

I have got a good reason or pretence for excusing me to Monsieur Helvetius with regard to the translating his work. A translation of it was previously advertised here.

I remain, &c.

Mr. HUME *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

My dear Sir, London, 29th May, 1759.

I HAD a letter from Helvetius lately, wrote before your book arrived at Paris. He tells me that the Abbé Prevot, who had just finished the translation of my History, *paroit très-disposé à traduire l'Histoire d'Ecosse que vient de faire Monsieur Robertson.* If he be engaged by my persuasion, I shall have the satisfaction of doing you a real credit and pleasure: for he is one of the best pens in Paris.

I looked with great impatience in your new edition for the note you seemed to intend with regard to the breach of the capitulation of Perth; and was much disappointed at missing it. I own that I am very curious on that head. I cannot so much as imagine a colour upon which their accusations could possibly be founded. The articles were only two; indemnity to the inhabitants, and the exclusion of French soldiers—now that Scotch national troops were not Frenchmen and foreigners seems pretty apparent: and both Knox and the manifesto of the Congregation acquit the Queen-Regent of any breach of the first article, as I had observed in my note to page 422. This makes me suspect that some facts have escaped me; and I beg you to indulge my curiosity by informing me of them.

* * * * *

Our friend Smith† is very successful here, and Gerard ‡ is very well received. The Epigoniad I cannot so much promise for, though I have done all in my power to forward it, particularly by writing a letter to the Critical Review, which you may peruse. I find, however, some good judges profess a great esteem for it, but *habent et sua fata libelli:* however, if you want a little flattery to the author, (which I own is very refreshing to an author,) you may tell him that Lord Chesterfield said to me he

† Theory of Moral Sentiments. ‡ Essay on Taste.

was a great poet. I imagine that Wilkie will be very much elevated by praise from an English Earl, and a Knight of the Garter, and an Ambassador, and a Secretary of State, and a man of so great reputation. For I observe that the greatest rustics are commonly most affected with such circumstances.

Ferguson's book * has a great deal of genius and fine writing, and will appear in time.

From Dr. BIRCH *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Dear Sir, London, Feb. 8th, 1759.

I HAVE just read over the second volume of your excellent History; and the satisfaction which I have received from the perusal of it, and the gratitude which I owe you for the honour done me in it, as well as for so valuable a present, will not permit me to lose one post in returning you my sincerest acknowledgments. My Lord Royston likewise desires me to transmit to you his thanks and compliments in the strongest terms.

Though your work has been scarce a fortnight in the hands of the public, I can already inform you, upon the authority of the best judges, that the spirit and elegance of the composition, and the candour, moderation, and humanity which run through it, will secure you the general approbation both of the present age and posterity, and raise the character of our country in a species of writing, in which of all others it has been most defective.

If the second volume of the State Papers of Lord Burghley, published since Christmas here, had appeared before your History had been finished, it would have furnished you with reasons for entertaining a less favourable opinion of Mary Queen of Scots in one or two points, than you seem at present possessed of. The principal is with regard to her last intrigues and correspondences

* Essay on the History of Civil Society.

which were the immediate cause of her death. And I could wish you had likewise seen a manuscript account of her trial in Lord Royston's possession. This account is much fuller than Camden's, whose History is justly to be suspected in every thing relating to her; or than any other that has yet seen the light. It contains so ample a state of the evidence produced of her guilt, as, I think, leaves no doubt of it; notwithstanding that the witnesses were not confronted with her; a manner of proceeding, which, though certainly due to every person accused, was not usual either before her time or long after.

You conclude in the note, vol. i. p. 307., in favour of her innocence from any criminal intrigue with Rizzio, from the silence to Randolph on that head. But I apprehend, that in opposition to this allegation you may be urged with the joint letter of that gentleman and the Earl of Bedford of 27th March, 1566, in your Appendix, No. xv. p. 22.

I desire you to make my compliments acceptable to Sir David Dalrymple and Mr. Davidson, and believe me be, &c.

THOMAS BIRCH.

From Sir GILBERT ELLIOT *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Dear Sir, Admiralty, January 20th, 1759.

MILLAR has just sent me the History of Scotland. I cannot imagine why he should delay the publication so long as the first of February, for I well know that the printing has been completed a great while. You could have sent me no present which on its own account I should have esteemed so much; but you have greatly enhanced its value, by allowing me to accept it as a memorial and testimony of a friendship which I have long cultivated with equal satisfaction and sincerity. I am no stranger to your book, though your copy is but just put

into my hands: David Hume so far indulged my impatience, as to allow me to carry to the country, during the holidays, the loose sheets which he happened to have by him. In that condition I read it quite through with the greatest satisfaction, and in much less time than I ever employed on any portion of history of the same length. I had certainly neither leisure nor inclination to exercise the function of a critic; carried along with the stream of the narration, I only felt, when I came to the conclusion, that you had greatly exceeded the expectations I had formed, though I do assure you these were not a little sanguine. If upon a more deliberate perusal, I discover any blemish, I shall point it out without any scruple: at present, it seems to me that you have rendered the period you treat of as interesting as any part of our British story; the views you open of policy, manners, and religion, are ingenious, solid, and deep. Your work will certainly be ranked in the highest historical class; and for my own part, I think it besides, a composition of uncommon genius and eloquence.—I was afraid you might have been interrupted by the Reformation, but I find it much otherwise; you treat it with great propriety, and in my opinion with sufficient fredom. No revolution, whether civil or religious, can be accomplished without that degree of ardour and passion, which, in a later age, will be matter of ridicule to men who do not feel the occasion, and enter into the spirit of the times. But I must not get into dissertations;—I hope you will ever believe me, with great regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient and faithful Servant,

GILB. ELLIOT.

NOTE D. p. 56.

From Baron D'HOLBACH *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Sir, Paris, the 30th of May, 1768.

I RECEIVED but a few days ago the favour of your letter, sent to me by Mr. Andrew Stuart: I am very proud of being instrumental in contributing to the translation of the valuable work you are going to publish. The excellent work you have published already is a sure sign of the reception your History of Charles V. will meet with in the continent; such an interesting subject deserves undoubtedly the attention of all Europe. You are very much in the right of being afraid of the hackney translators of Holland and Paris; accordingly I thought it my duty to find out an able hand capable of answering your desire. M. Suard, a gentleman well known for his style in French, and his knowledge in the English language, has, at my request, undertaken the translation of your valuable book; I know nobody in this country capable of performing better such a grand design. Consequently the best way will be for your bookseller, as soon as he publishes one sheet, to send it immediately *à Monsieur M. Suard, Directeur de la Gazette de France, rue St. Roch à Paris.* By means of this the sheets of your book will be translated as soon as they come from the press, provided the bookseller of London is very strict in not showing the same favour to any other man upon the continent.

I have the honour to be,
With great consideration,
Sir,
Your most obedient and humble Servant,
D'HOLBACH.

NOTE E. p. 65.

THE following letters have no immediate connection with the History of Dr. Robertson's Life; but I trust that no apology is necessary for their insertion here.

From Mr. HUME *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Dear Robertson, Paris, 1st December, 1763.

AMONG other agreeable circumstances, which attend me at Paris, I must mention that of having a lady for a translator, a woman of merit, the widow of an advocate. She was before very poor, and known but to few; but this work has got her reputation, and procured her a pension from the court, which sets her at her ease. She tells me, that she has got a habit of industry; and would continue, if I could point out to her any other English book she could undertake, without running the risque of being anticipated by any other translator. Your History of Scotland is translated, and is in the press: but I recommended to her your History of Charles V., and promised to write to you, in order to know when it would be printed, and to desire you to send over the sheets from London as they came from the press; I should put them into her hands, and she would by that means have the start of every other translator. My two volumes last published are at present in the press. She has a very easy natural style; sometimes she mistakes the sense; but I now correct her manuscript; and should be happy to render you the same service, if my leisure permit me, as I hope it will. Do you ask me about my course of life? I can only say, that I eat nothing but ambrosia, drink nothing but nectar, breathe nothing but incense, and tread on nothing but flowers. Every man I meet, and still more every lady, would think they were wanting in the most indispensable duty if they did not make to me a long and elaborate harangue in my praise. What happened

last week, when I had the honour of being presented to the D——n's children at Versailles, is one of the most curious scenes I ever yet passed through. The Duc de B. the eldest, a boy of ten years old, stepped forth and told me how many friends and admirers I had in this country, and that he reckoned himself in the number from the pleasure he had received from the reading of many passages in my works. When he had finished, his brother, the Count de P. who is two years younger, began his discourse, and informed me that I had been long and impatiently expected in France; and that he himself expected soon to have great satisfaction from the reading of my fine History. But what is more curious; when I was carried thence to the Count D'A., who is but four years of age, I heard him mumble something, which, though he had forgot in the way, I conjectured from some scattered words to have been also a panegyric dictated to him. Nothing could more surprise my friends, the Parisian philosophers, than this incident * * * * * * * * * * * It is conjectured that this honour was payed me by express order from the D., who, indeed, is not, on any occasion, sparing in my praise.

All this attention and panegyric was at first oppressive to me; but now it sits more easy. I have recovered, in some measure, the use of the language, and am falling into friendships, which are very agreeable; much more so than silly, distant admiration. They now begin to banter me, and tell droll stories of me, which they have either observed themselves, or have heard from others; so that you see I am beginning to be at home. It is probable that this place will be long my home. I feel little inclination to the factious barbarians of London; and have ever desired to remain in the place where I am planted. How much more so, when it is the best place in the world? I could here live in great abundance on the half

of my income; for there is no place where money is so little requisite to a man who is distinguished either by his birth or by personal qualities. I could run out, you see, in a panegyric on the people; but you would suspect, that this was a mutual convention between us. However, I cannot forbear observing, on what a different footing learning and the learned are here, from what they are among the factious barbarians above mentioned.

I have here met with a prodigious historical curiosity, the Memoirs of King James II. in fourteen volumes, all wrote with his own hand, and kept in the Scots College. I have looked into it, and have made great discoveries. It will be all communicated to me; and I have had an offer of access to the Secretary of State's office, if I want to know the dispatches of any French minister that resided in London. But these matters are much out of my head. I beg of you to visit Lord Marischal, who will be pleased with your company. I have little paper remaining and less time; and therefore conclude abruptly by assuring you that I am,

Dear Doctor, Yours sincerely,

DAVID HUME.

From Mr. HUME *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

My dear Sir, London, 19th March, 1767.

YOU do extremely right in applying to me wherever it is the least likely I can serve you or any of your friends. I consulted immediately with General Conway, who told me, as I suspected, that the chaplains to forts and garrisons were appointed by the War Office, and did not belong to his department. Unhappily I have but a slight acquaintance with Lord Barrington, and cannot venture to ask him any favour; but I shall call on Pryce Campbell, though not of my acquaintance, and shall enquire of him the canals through which this affair may be conducted: perhaps it may lie in my power to facilitate it by some means or other.

I shall endeavour to find out the unhappy philosopher you mention, though it will be difficult for me to do him any service. He is an ingenious man, but unfortunate in his conduct, particularly in the early part of his life. The world is so cruel as never to overlook those flaws; and nothing but hypocrisy can fully cover them from observation. There is not so effectual a scourer of reputations in the world. I wish that I had never parted with that *Lixivium*, in case I should at any future time have occasion for it.

* * * * *

* * A few days before my arrival in London, Mr. Davenport had carried to Mr. Conway a letter of Rousseau's, in which that philosopher says, that he had never meant to refuse the King's bounty, that he would be proud of accepting it, but that he would owe it entirely to His Majesty's generosity and that of his ministers, and would refuse it if it came through any other canal whatsoever, even that of Mr. Davenport. Mr. Davenport then addressed himself to Mr. Conway, and asked whether it was not possible to recover what this man's madness had thrown away? The Secretary replied, that I should be in London in a few days, and that he would take no steps in the affair but at my desire and with my approbation. When the matter was proposed to me, I exhorted the General to do this act of charity to a man of genius, however wild and extravagant. The King, when applied to, said, that since the pension had once been promised, it should be granted notwithstanding all that had passed in the interval. And thus the affair is happily finished, unless some new extravagance come across the philosopher, and engage him to reject what he has a-new applied for. If he knew my situation with General Conway he probably would: for he must then conjecture that the affair could not be done without my consent.

Ferguson's book goes on here with great success. A few days ago I saw Mrs. Montague, who has just finished

it with great pleasure: I mean, she was sorry to finish it, but had read it with great pleasure. I asked her, Whether she was satisfied with the style? Whether it did not savour somewhat of the country? O yes, said she, a great deal: it seems almost impossible that any one could write such a style except a Scotsman.

I find you prognosticate a very short date to my administration: I really believe that few (but not evil) will be my days. My absence will not probably allow my claret time to ripen, much less to sour. However that may be, I hope to drink out the remainder of it with you in mirth and jollity. I am sincerely yours *usque ad aras.*

DAVID HUME.

In comparing the amiable qualities displayed in Mr. Hume's familiar letters, and (according to the universal testimony of his friends) exhibited in the whole tenor of his private conduct, with those passages in his metaphysical writings which strike at the root of the moral and religious principles of our nature, I have sometimes pleased myself with recollecting the ingenious argument against the theories of Epicurus, which Cicero deduces from the history of that philosopher's life. "Ac mihi "quidem, quod et ipse vir bonus fuit, et multi Epicurei "fuerunt et hodie sunt et in amicitia fideles, et in omni "vita constantes et graves, nec voluptate sed officio con-"silia moderantes, hoc videtur major vis honestatis et "minor voluptatis. Ita enim vivunt quidam, ut eorum "vita refellatur oratio. Atque ut ceteri existimantur "dicere melius quam facere, sic hi mihi videntur facere "melius quam dicere."

NOTE F. p. 84.

I have allotted this note for some letters from Mr. Gibbon to Dr. Robertson, which appeared to me likely to interest the public curiosity.

Mr. GIBBON *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Bentinck Street, Nov. the 3d, 1779.

* * * * *

WHEN I express my strong hope that you will visit London next spring, I must acknowledge that it is of the most interesting kind. Besides the pleasure which I shall enjoy in your society and conversation, I cherish the expectation of deriving much benefit from your candid and friendly criticism. The remainder of my first period of the Decline and Fall, &c. which will end with the ruin of the Western Empire, is already very far advanced; but the subject has already grown so much under my hands, that it will form a second and third volume in quarto, which will probably go to the press in the course of the ensuing summer.—Perhaps you have seen in the papers, that I was appointed some time ago one of the Lords of Trade; but I believe you are enough acquainted with the country to judge, that the business of my new office has not much interrupted the progress of my studies. The attendance in Parliament is indeed more laborious; I apprehend a rough session, and I fear that a black cloud is gathering in Ireland.

Be so good as to present my sincere compliments to Mr. Smith, Mr. Ferguson, and, if he should still be with you, to Dr. Gillies, for whose acquaintance I esteem myself much indebted to you. I have often considered, with some sort of envy, the valuable society which you possess in so narrow a compass.

I am, dear Sir, with the highest regard,

Most faithfully yours,

E. GIBBON.

Mr. GIBBON *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Dear Sir, London, September 1, 1783.

YOUR candid and friendly interpretation will ascribe

to business, to study, to pleasure, to constitutional indolence, or to any other venial cause, the guilt of neglecting so valuable a correspondent as yourself. I should have thanked you for the opportunities which you have afforded me of forming an acquaintance with several men of merit who deserve your friendship, and whose character and conversation suggest a very pleasing idea of the society which you enjoy at Edinburgh.—I must at the same time lament, that the hurry of a London life has not allowed me to obtain so much as I could have wished, of their company, and must have given them an unfavourable opinion of my hospitality, unless they have weighed with indulgence the various obstacles of time and place. Mr. Stewart I had not even the pleasure of seeing; he passed through this city in his way to Paris, while I was confined with a painful fit of the gout, and in the short interval of his stay, the hours of meeting which were mutually proposed, could not be made to agree with our respective engagements. Mr. Dalzel, who is undoubtedly a modest and learned man, I have had the pleasure of seeing; but his arrival has unluckily fallen on a time of year, and a particular year, in which I have been very little in town. I should rejoice if I could repay these losses by a visit to Edinburgh, a more tranquil scene, to which yourself, and our friend Mr. Adam Smith, would powerfully attract me. But this project, which, in a leisure hour, has often amused my fancy, must now be resigned, or must be postponed at least to a very distant period. In a very few days (before I could receive the favour of an answer) I shall begin my journey to Lausanne in Switzerland, where I shall fix my residence, in a delightful situation, with a dear and excellent friend of that country; still mindful of my British friends, but renouncing, without reluctance, the tumult of Parliament, the hopes and fears, the prejudices and passions of political life, to which my nature has always been averse. Our noble friend Lord Loughborough

has endeavoured to divert me from this resolution; he rises every day in dignity and reputation; and if the means of patronage had not been so strangely reduced by our modern reformers, I am persuaded his constant and liberal kindness would more than satisfy the moderate desires of a philosopher. What I cannot hope for from the favour of ministers, I must patiently expect from the course of nature; and this exile, which I do not view in a very gloomy light, will be terminated in due time, by the deaths of aged ladies, whose inheritance will place me in an easy and even affluent situation; but these particulars are only designed for the ear of friendship.

I have already dispatched to Lausanne, two immense cases of books, the tools of my historical manufacture; others I shall find on the spot; and that country is not destitute of public and private libraries, which will be freely opened for the use of a man of letters. The tranquil leisure which I shall enjoy, will be partly employed in the prosecution of my history; but although my diligence will be quickened by the prospect of returning to England, to publish the last volumes (three, I am afraid) of this laborious work, yet I shall proceed with cautious steps to compose and to correct, and the dryness of my undertaking will be relieved by mixture of more elegant and classical studies, more especially of the Greek authors. Such good company will, I am sure, be pleasant to the historian, and I am inclined to believe that it will be beneficial to the work itself. I have been lately much flattered with the praise of Dr. Blair, and a censure of the Abbé de Mably; both of them are precisely the men from whom I could wish to obtain praise and censure, and both these gratifications I have the pleasure of sharing with yourself. The Abbé appears to hate, and affects to despise, every writer of his own times, who has been well received by the public; and Dr. Blair, who is a master in one species of composition, has displayed, on every subject, the warmest feel-

ing and the most accurate judgment,—I will frankly own that my pride is elated, as often as I find myself ranked in the triumvirate of British historians of the present age; and though I feel myself the Lepidus, I contemplate with pleasure the superiority of my colleagues. Will you be so good as to assure Dr. A. Smith of my regard and attachment. I consider myself as writing to both, and will not fix him for a separate answer. My direction is, *A Monsieur Monsieur Gibbon à Lausanne en Suisse.* I shall often plume myself on the friendship of Dr. Robertson, but must I tell foreigners, that while the meaner heroes fight, Achilles has retired from war?

I am, my dear Sir,

Most affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON.

From MR. GIBBON *to* DR. ROBERTSON.

Lord Sheffield's, Downing Street,
March 26, 1788.

Dear Sir,

AN error in your direction (to Wimpole Street, where I never had an house) delayed some time the delivery of your very obliging letter, but that delay is not sufficient to excuse me for not taking an earlier notice of it. Perhaps the number of minute but indispensable cares that seem to multiply before the hour of publication, may prove a better apology, especially with a friend who has himself passed through the same labours of the same consummation. The important day is now fixed to the eighth of May, and it was chosen by Cadell, as it coincides with the end of the fifty-first year of the author's age. That honest and liberal bookseller has invited me to celebrate the double festival, by a dinner at his house.—Some of our common friends will be present, but we shall all lament your absence, and that of Dr. Adam Smith (whose health and welfare will always be most interesting to me); and it gives me real concern that the time of your visits to the metro-

polis has not agreed with my transient residence in my native country. I am grateful for the opportunity with which you furnish me of again perusing your works in their most improved state; and I have desired Cadell to dispatch, for the use of my two Edinburgh friends, two copies of the last three volumes of my History. Whatever may be the inconstancy of taste or fashion, a rational lover of fame may be satisfied if he deserves and obtains your approbation. The praise which has ever been the most flattering to my ear is, to find my name associated with the names of Robertson and Hume; and provided I can maintain my place in the triumvirate, I am indifferent at what distance I am ranked below my companions and masters.

With regard to my present work, I am inclined to believe that it surpasses in variety and entertainment at least the second and third volumes. A long and eventful period is compressed into a smaller space, and the new barbarians, who now assault and subvert the Roman Empire, enjoy the advantage of speaking their own language, and relating their own exploits.

After the publication of these last volumes, which extend to the siege of Constantinople, and comprise the ruins of ancient Rome, I shall retire (in about two months) to Lausanne, and my friends will be pleased to hear that I enjoy in that retreat, as much repose, and even happiness, as is consistent, perhaps, with the human condition. At proper intervals, I hope to repeat my visits to England; but no change of circumstance or situation will probably tempt me to desert my Swiss residence, which unites almost every advantage that riches can give, or fancy desire. With regard to my future literary plans, I can add nothing to what you will soon read in my preface. But an hour's conversation with you, would allow me to explain some visionary designs which sometimes float in my mind; and, if I should ever form any serious resolution of labours,

I would previously, though by the imperfect mode of a letter, consult you on the propriety and merit of any new undertakings. I am, with great regard,

Dear Sir,

Most faithfully yours,

E. GIBBON.

NOTE G. p. 88.

As Dr. Robertson received particular satisfaction from the approbation of the gentleman whose geographical researches suggested the first idea of this disquisition, I flatter myself that no apology is necessary for the liberty I take in quoting a short extract from one of his letters.

From Major RENNELL *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

London, 2d July, 1791.

* * * AFTER reading your book twice, I may with truth say, that I was never more instructed or amused than by the perusal of it; for although a great part of its subject had long been revolving in my mind, yet I had not been able to concentrate the matter in the manner you have done, or to make the different parts bear on each other.

The subject of the Appendix was what interested the public greatly; and was only to be acquired (if at all) by the study or perusal of a great number of different tracts; a task not to be accomplished by ordinary readers.

It gives me unfeigned pleasure to have been the instrument of suggesting such a task to you; and I shall reflect with pleasure, during my life, that I shall travel down to posterity with you; you, in your place, in the *great road* of History; whilst I keep the *side-path* of Geography. Since I understood the subject, I have ever thought that the best historian is the best geographer; and if historians would direct a proper person, skilled in the principles of geography, to *embody* (as I may say) their ideas for them,

the historian would find himself better served, than by relying on those who may properly be styled *map-makers*. For, after all, whence does the geographer derive his materials but from the labours of the historian? * *

NOTE H. p. 101.

SINCE these remarks on Dr. Robertson's style were written, I have met with some critical reflections on the same subject by Mr. Burke, too honourable for Dr. Robertson to be suppressed in this publication, although, in some particulars, they do not coincide with the opinion I have presumed to state†.

"There is a style" (says Mr. Burke, in a letter addressed to Mr. Murphy on his Translation of Tacitus) "which daily gains ground amongst us, which I should "be sorry to see further advanced by a writer of your just "reputation. The tendency of the mode to which I allude "is, to establish two very different idioms amongst us, "and to introduce a marked distinction between the En-"glish that is written and the English that is spoken. "This practice, if grown a little more general, would con-"firm this distemper, such I must think it, in our lan-"guage, and perhaps render it incurable.

"From this feigned manner of *falsetto*, as I think the "musicians call something of the same sort in singing, no "one modern historian, Robertson only excepted, is per-"fectly free. It is assumed, I know, to give dignity and "variety to the style. But whatever success the attempt "may sometimes have, it is always obtained at the ex-"pence of purity, and of the graces that are natural and "appropriate to our language. It is true that when the

† It is proper for me to mention, that I have no authority for the authenticity of the following passage but that of a London newspaper, in which it appeared some years ago. I do not find, however, that it has been ever called in question.

" exigence calls for auxiliaries of all sorts, and common
" language becomes unequal to the demands of extraor-
" dinary thoughts, something ought to be conceded to the
" necessities which make 'ambition virtue.' But the al-
" lowances to necessities ought not to grow into a prac-
" tice. Those portents and prodigies ought not to grow
" too common. If you have, here and there, (much more
" rarely, however, than others of great and not unmerited
" fame,) fallen into an error, which is not that of the dull
" or careless, you have an author who is himself guilty,
" in his own tongue, of the same fault in a very high de-
" gree. No author thinks more deeply, or paints more
" strongly; but he seldom or ever expresses himself na-
" turally. It is plain, that comparing him with Plautus
" and Terence, or the beautiful fragments of Publius Sy-
" rus, he did not write the language of good conversation.
" Cicero is much nearer to it. Tacitus, and the writers
" of his time, have fallen into that vice, by aiming at a
" poetical style. It is true, that eloquence in both modes
" of rhetorick is fundamentally the same; but the manner
" of handling it is totally different, even where words and
" phrases may be transferred from the one of these depart-
" ments of writing to the other."

For this encomium on Dr. Robertson's style, when considered in contrast with that of Mr. Gibbon (to whom it is probable that Mr. Burke's strictures more particularly refer), there is unquestionably a very solid foundation; but in estimating the merits of the former as an English writer, I must acknowledge that I should never have thought of singling out, among his characteristical excellencies, an approach to the language of good conversation. It is indeed surprising, when we attend to the elevation of that tone which he uniformly sustains, how very seldom his turn of expression can be censured as unnatural or affected. The graces of his composition, however, although great and various, are by no means those which are *appro-*

priate to our language; and, in fact, he knew too well the extent and the limits of his own powers to attempt them. Accordingly he has aimed at perfections of a still higher order, the effect of which is scarcely diminished, when we contemplate them through the medium of a foreign translation.

Lord Chesterfield's judgment with respect to Dr. Robertson, while it is equally flattering with that of Mr. Burke, appears to me more precise and just. "There is a History "lately come out, of the reign of Mary Queen of Scots "and her son King James, written by one Robertson a "Scotchman, which for *clearness, purity*, and *dignity*, I "will not scruple to compare with the best historians ex-"tant, not excepting Davila, Guicciardini, and perhaps "Livy."

May I be permitted to remark, that in the opposite extreme to that fault which Mr. Burke has here so justly censured, there is another originating in too close an adherence to what he recommends as the model of good writing, the ease and familiarity of colloquial discourse. In the productions of his more advanced years, he has occasionally fallen into it himself, and has sanctioned it by his example, in the numerous herd of his imitators, who are incapable of atoning for it, by copying the exquisite and inimitable beauties which abound in his compositions. For my own part, I can much more easily reconcile myself, in a grave and dignified argument, to the *dulcia vitia* of Tacitus and of Gibbon, than to that affectation of *cant* words and allusions which so often debases Mr. Burke's eloquence, and which was long ago stigmatized by Swift as "the most ruin-"ous of all the corruptions of a language."

NOTE I. p. 102.

It might be considered by some as a blameable omission, if I were to pass over in silence the marks of regard

which Dr. Robertson received from different literary academies on the continent. I have already taken notice of the honour conferred on him by the Royal Academy of History at Madrid; but it remains for me to mention, that in 1781 he was elected one of the foreign members of the Academy of Sciences at Padua; and in 1783, one of the foreign members of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburgh.

From the last of these cities, he was honoured with another very flattering distinction; the intelligence of which was conveyed to him by his friend Dr. Rogerson in a letter from which the following passage is transcribed:

"Your History of America was received and perused "by Her Imperial Majesty with singular marks of appro- "bation. All your historical productions have been ever "favourite parts of her reading. Not long ago, doing me "the honour to converse with me upon historical compo- "sition, she mentioned you with particular distinction, "and with much admiration of that sagacity and discern- "ment displayed by you in painting the human mind and "character, as diversified by the various causes that ope- "rated upon it, in those æras and states of society on which "your subject led you to treat. She assigned you the "place of first model in that species of composition. As to "the History of Charles V. she was pleased to add, '*c'est* "*le compagnon constant de tous mes voyages; je ne me lasse* "*jamais à le lire, et particulièrement le premier volume.*'

"She then presented a very handsome gold enamelled "snuff-box, richly set with diamonds, ordering me to "transmit it to you, and to desire your acceptance of it "as a mark of her esteem, observing, at the same time, "most graciously, that a person, whose labours had af- "forded her so much satisfaction, merited some attention "from her."

NOTE K. p. 104.

"THE mixture of ecclesiastical and lay-members in the "Church Courts is attended with the happiest effects. "It corrects that *esprit de corps* which is apt to prevail "in all assemblies of professional men. It affords the "principal nobility and gentry of Scotland an opportu-"nity of obtaining a seat in the General Assembly when "any interesting object calls for their attendance; and "although in the factious and troublesome times which "our ancestors saw, the General Assembly, by means of "this mixture, became a scene of political debate, this "accidental evil is counterbalanced by permanent good: "for the presence of those lay-members of high rank, "whose names are usually found upon the roll of the "Assembly, has a powerful influence in maintaining that "connection between church and state which is neces-"sary for the peace, security, and welfare of both*."

NOTE L. p. 110.

THE paper referred to in the text is entitled "Reasons "of Dissent from the Judgment and Resolution of the "Commission, March 11, 1752, resolving to inflict no "Censure on the Presbytery of Dumfermline for their "Disobedience in relation to the Settlement of Inver-"keithing." It is subscribed by Dr. Robertson, Dr. Blair, Mr. John Home, and a few of their friends. I shall subjoin the two first articles.

1. "Because we conceive this sentence of the Com-"mission to be inconsistent with the nature and first prin-"ciples of society. When men are considered as indi-"viduals, we acknowledge that they have no guide but "their own understanding, and no judge but their own "conscience. But we hold it for an undeniable princi-"ple, that, as members of society, they are bound in many

* MS. of Dr. Hill.

" instances to follow the judgment of the society. By
" joining together in society, we enjoy many advantages,
" which we could neither purchase nor secure in a dis-
" united state. In consideration of these, we consent that
" regulations for public order shall be established; not by
" the private fancy of every individual, but by the judg-
" ment of the majority, or of those with whom the soci-
" ety has consented to intrust the legislative power.
" Their judgment must necessarily be absolute and final,
" and their decisions received as the voice and instruction
" of the whole. In a numerous society, it seldom hap-
" pens that all the members think uniformly concerning
" the wisdom and expedience of any public regulation;
" but no sooner is that regulation enacted, than private
" judgment is so far superseded, that even they who dis-
" approve it, are notwithstanding bound to obey it, and
" to put it in execution if required: unless in a case of
" such gross iniquity and manifest violation of the original
" design of the society as justifies resistance to the supreme
" power, and makes it better to have the society dissolved
" than to submit to established iniquity. Such extraor-
" dinary cases we can easily conceive there may be, as
" will give any man a just title to seek the dissolution of
" the society to which he belongs, or at least will fully
" justify his withdrawing from it. But as long as he con-
" tinues in it, professes regard for it, and reaps the emo-
" luments of it, if he refuses to obey its laws, he mani-
" festly acts both a disorderly and dishonest part: he lays
" claim to the privileges of the society while he contemns
" the authority of it; and by all principles of equity and
" reason is justly subjected to its censures. They who
" maintain that such disobedience deserves no censure,
" maintain, in effect, that there should be no such thing
" as government and order. They deny those first prin-
" ciples by which men are united in society; and endea-
" vour to establish such maxims, as will justify not only

" licentiousness in ecclesiastical, but rebellion and disorder
" in civil government. And therefore, as the Reverend
" Commission have by their sentence declared, that diso-
" bedience to the supreme judicature of the church nei-
" ther infers guilt, nor deserves censure; as they have
" surrendered a right essential to the nature and subsist-
" ence of every society; as they have (so far as lay in
" them) betrayed the privileges and deserted the orders of
" the constitution; we could not have acted a dutiful
" part to the church, nor a safe one to ourselves, unless
" we had dissented from this sentence; and craved liberty
" to represent to this venerable assembly, that this deed
" appears to us to be manifestly beyond the powers of a
" Commission.

2. " Because this sentence of the Commission, as it is
" subversive of society in general, so, in our judgments,
" it is absolutely inconsistent with the nature and preser-
" vation of ecclesiastical society in particular.—The cha-
" racters which we bear, of Ministers and Elders of this
" Church, render it unnecessary for us to declare, that
" we join with all Protestants in acknowledging the Lord
" Jesus Christ to be the only King and Head of his
" Church. We admit that the church is not merely a
" voluntary society, but a society founded by the laws of
" Christ. But to his laws we conceive it to be most
" agreeable, that order should be preserved in the exter-
" nal administration of the affairs of the church. And
" we contend, in the words of our *Confession of Faith*,
" 'That there are some circumstances concerning the
" worship of God, and the government of the church,
" common to human actions and societies, which are to
" be ordered by the light of nature and Christian pru-
" dence according to the general rules of the word,
" which are always to be observed.' It is very evident
" that unless the church were supported by continual
" miracles, and a perpetual and extraordinary interposi-

" tion of Heaven, it can only subsist by those fundamen-
" tal maxims by which all society subsists. A kingdom
" divided against itself cannot stand. There can be no
" union, and by consequence there can be no society,
" where there is no subordination; and therefore since mi-
" racles are now ceased, we do conceive that no church
" or ecclesiastical society can exist without obedience re-
" quired from its members, and enforced by proper sanc-
" tions. Accordingly, there never was any regularly con-
" stituted church in the Christian world, where there
" was not at the same time some exercise of discipline
" and authority. It has indeed been asserted, 'That the
" censures of the church are never to be inflicted, but
" upon open transgressors of the laws of Christ himself;
" and that no man is to be construed an open transgres-
" sor of the laws of Christ for not obeying the commands
" of any assembly of fallible men, when he declares it
" was a conscientious regard to the will of Christ that
" led him to this disobedience.'—This is called asserting
" liberty of conscience, and supporting the rights of pri-
" vate judgment; and upon such reasonings the reverend
" Commission proceeded in coming to that decision of
" which we now complain. But we think ourselves
" called on to say, and we say it with concern, that such
" principles as these appear to us calculated to establish
" the most extravagant maxims of independency, and to
" overthrow from the very foundation that happy ecclesi-
" astical constitution which we glory in being members
" of, and which we are resolved to support. For, upon
" these principles, no church whatever, consisting, as
" every church on earth must consist, of *fallible* men, has
" right to inflict any censure on any disobedient person.
" Let such person only think fit boldly to use the name
" of conscience, and, sheltered under its authority, he ac-
" quires at once a right of doing whatsoever is good in his
" own eyes. If anarchy and confusion follow, as no

" doubt they will, there is, it seems, no remedy. We
" are sorry to say that brethren who profess to hold such
" principles, ought to have acted more consistently with
" them, and not to have joined themselves to any church
" till once they had found out an assembly of *infallible*
" men, to whose authority they would have acknowledged
" submission to be due. We allow to the right of private
" judgment all the extent and obligation that reason or
" religion require; but we can never admit, that any
" man's private judgment gives him a right to disturb,
" with impunity, all public order. We hold, that as
" every man has a right to judge for himself in religious
" matters, so every church or society of Christians has a
" right to judge for itself, what method of external admi-
" nistration is most agreeable to the laws of Christ; and
" no man ought to become a member of that church, who
" is not resolved to conform himself to its administration.
" We think it very consistent with conscience for infe-
" riors to disapprove, in their own mind, of a judgment
" given by a superior court, and yet to put that judgment
" in execution as the deed of their superiors for conscience-
" sake; seeing we humbly conceive it is, or ought to be,
" a matter of conscience with every member of the church,
" to support the authority of that church to which he be-
" longs. Church-censures are declared by our *Confes-*
" *sion of Faith* to be 'necessary, not only for gaining and
" reclaiming the offending brethren, but also for deterring
" of others from the like offences, and for purging out
" the leaven which might leaven the whole lump.' What
" these censures are, and what the crimes against which
" they are directed, is easily to be learned from the con-
" stitution of every church; and whoever believes its cen-
" sure to be too severe, or its known orders and laws to
" be in any respect iniquitous, so that he cannot in con-
" science comply with them, ought to beware of involv-
" ing himself in sin by entering into it; or if he hath

" rashly joined himself, he is bound, as an honest man
" and a good Christian, to withdraw, and to keep his con-
" science clear and undefiled. But, on the other hand,
" if a judicature, which is appointed to be the guardian and
" defender of the laws and orders of the society, shall
" absolve them who break their laws, from all censure,
" and by such a deed encourage and invite to future
" disobedience, we conceive it will be found, that they
" have exceeded their powers, and betrayed their trust in
" their most essential instance."

* * * * *

NOTE M. p. 112.

" DR. ROBERTSON'S system with respect to the law
" of patronage proceeded on the following principles:
" That as patronage is the law of the land, the courts of
" a national church established and protected by law, and
" all the individual ministers of that church, are bound, in
" as far as it depends upon exertions arising from the
" duties of their place, to give it effect: that every oppo-
" sition to the legal rights of patrons tends to diminish
" that reverence which all the subjects of a free govern-
" ment ought to entertain for the law; and that it is dan-
" gerous to accustom the people to think that they can
" elude the law or defeat its operation, because success
" in one instance leads to greater licentiousness. Upon
" these principles Dr. Robertson thought that the church-
" Courts betrayed their duty to the constitution, when the
" spirit of their decisions, or negligence in enforcing obe-
" dience to their orders, created unnecessary obstacles to
" the exercise of the right of patronage, and fostered in
" the minds of the people the false idea that they have a
" right to choose their own ministers, or even a negative
" upon the nomination of the patron. He was well aware
" that the subjects of Great Britain are entitled to apply

" in a constitutional manner for the repeal of every law
" which they consider as a grievance. But while he sup-
" ported patronage as the existing law, he regarded it also
" as the most expedient method of settling vacant pa-
" rishes. It did not appear to him that the people are
" competent judges of those qualities which a minister
" should possess in order to be a useful teacher either of the
" doctrines of pure religion, or of the precepts of sound
" morality. He suspected that if the probationers of the
" church were taught to consider their success in obtain-
" ing a settlement as depending upon a popular election,
" many of them would be tempted to adopt a manner of
" preaching more calculated to please the people than to
" promote their edification. He thought that there is
" little danger to be apprehended from the abuse of the
" law of patronage, because the presentee must be chosen
" from amongst those whom the church itself had ap-
" proved of, and had licensed as qualified for the office
" of the ministry; because a presentee cannot be admitted
" to the benefice, if any relevant charge as to his life or
" doctrine be proved against him: and because, after
" ordination and admission, he is liable to be deposed for
" improper conduct. When every possible precaution is
" thus taken to prevent unqualified persons from being
" introduced into the church, or those who afterwards
" prove unworthy from remaining in it, the occasional
" evils and abuses from which no human institution is
" exempted, could not, in the opinion of Dr. Robertson,
" be fairly urged as reasons against the law of patronage."

* * * * *

" Such was the system which, in conjunction with the
" friend of his youth, Dr. Robertson ably supported for
" thirty years after his first appearance in the General
" Assembly. In speaking upon a particular question, he
" sometimes gave the outlines of this system for the satis-
" faction of the house in general, and the instruction of

" the younger members. The decisions which for a long
" course of years he dictated, form a common law of
" the church in which the system is unfolded. His con-
" versation imprinted upon the minds of those who were
" admitted to it during the course of the Assembly, the
" principles which pervaded his decisions: and thus
" were diffused throughout the church the rational and
" consistent ideas of Presbyterian government upon which
" he and his friends uniformly acted.

" These ideas continue to direct the General Assem-
" blies of the church of Scotland. For although it is
" not likely that any member of that house will ever pos-
" sess the unrivalled, undisputed influence with his bre-
" thren to which peculiar advantages of character and situ-
" ation conducted Dr. Robertson, his principles are so
" thoroughly understood, and so cordially approved by
" the great majority of the church of Scotland, that by
" means of that attention to the business and forms of
" the house which is paid by some of his early friends
" who yet survive, and by a succession of younger men
" trained in his school, the ecclesiastical affairs of Scot-
" land proceed on the same orderly systematical plan
" which was first introduced by the ability, the prudence,
" the firmness, the candour and moderation which he
" displayed upon every occasion."

NOTE N. p. 121.

A few particulars, " in addition to Dr. Erskine's funeral sermon on the death of Dr. Robertson," have been kindly communicated to me by my friend the Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart. The testimony which they contain to Dr. Robertson's merits as an ecclesiastical leader will have no small weight with those who are acquainted with the worth and the talents of the writer.

" In mentioning the character of Dr. Robertson as a
" leader of the prevailing party in the church, there is a

" circumstance which ought not to be omitted, by which
" he distinguished himself from all his predecessors who
" had held the same situation. Before his time, those of
" the clergy who pretended to guide the deliberations of
" the General Assembly, derived the chief part of their
" influence from their connection with the men who had
" the management of Scots affairs. They allowed them-
" selves to receive instructions from them, and even from
" those who acted under them. They looked up to them
" as their patrons, and ranged themselves with their de-
" pendents. Their influence, of consequence, subsisted
" no longer than the powers from which it was derived.
" A change in the management of Scots affairs either
" left the prevailing party in the church without their
" leaders, or obliged their leaders to submit to the mean-
" ness of receiving instructions from other patrons.—
" Dr. Robertson, from the beginning, disengaged him-
" self completely from a dependence which was never
" respectable, and to which he felt himself superior. He
" had the countenance of men in power; but he received
" it as a man who judged for himself, and whose influ-
" ence was his own. The political changes of his time
" did not affect his situation. The different men who had
" the management of Scots affairs uniformly co-operated
" with him—but though they assisted him, they looked
" up to *his personal influence* in the church, which no man
" in the country believed to be derived from *them*.

" Those who differed most in opinion with Dr. Ro-
" bertson, but who are sincerely attached to the interests
" and to the integrity of the church, must allow this con-
" duct to have been both respectable and meritorious.
" It will always reflect honour on his memory, and has
" left an important lesson to his successors.

" It is not useless to mention his fairness in the debates
" of the Assembly. Whether his opponents were con-
" vinced by his arguments or not, they were commonly

" sensible of the candour with which he stated them, and
" of the personal respect with which they were treated
" by him. And though the concessions which he was
" always ready to make to them when they did not affect
" the substance of his own argument, might be imputed
" to political sagacity as well as to candour, there was
" uniformly an appearance of candour in his manner, by
" which he preserved their good opinion, and which
" greatly contributed to extend his influence among his
" own friends. Like all popular meetings, the General
" Assembly sometimes contains individuals, who have
" more acuteness than delicacy, and who allow themselves
" to eke out their arguments by rude and personal invec-
" tives. Dr. Robertson had a superior address in reply-
" ing to men of this cast, without adopting their asperity,
" and often made them feel the absurdity of the personal
" attack, by the attention which he seemed to bestow on
" their argument.

" It should be mentioned also, that Dr. Robertson's
" early example, and his influence in more advanced life,
" chiefly contributed to render the debates in the Assembly
" interesting and respectable, by bringing forward all the
" men of abilities to their natural share of the public busi-
" ness. Before his time, this had been almost entirely in
" the hands of the older members of the church, who were
" the only persons that were thought entitled to deliver
" their opinions, and whose influence was often derived
" more from their age than from their judgment or their
" talents.

" I do not know whether the reasons, which led Dr. Ro-
" bertson to retire from the assemby after 1780, have
" ever been thoroughly understood.—They were not sug-
" gested by his age, for he was then only fifty-nine; nor
" by any diminution of his influence, for, in the appre-
" hension of the public, it was at that time as great as it
" had ever been. It is very probable that he anticipated

" a time when a new leader might come forward; and
" thought it better to retire while his influence was undi-
" minished, than to run the risque, in the end of his life,
" of a struggle with younger men, who might be as suc-
" cessful as he had been.—But I recollect distinctly, what
" he once said to myself on the subject, which I am per-
" suaded he repeated to many others. He had been often
" reproached by the more violent men of his party for not
" adopting stronger measures than he thought either right
" or wise. He had yielded to them many points against
" his own judgment; but they were not satisfied: he was
" plagued with letters of reproach and remonstrance on a
" variety of subjects, and he complained of the petulance
" and acrimony with which they were written. But there
" was one subject, which, for some years before he re-
" tired, had become particularly uneasy to him, and on
" which he said he had been more urged and fretted than
" on all the other subjects of contention in the church; the
" scheme into which many of his friends entered zealously
" for abolishing subscription to the confession of Faith and
" Formula. This he expressly declared his resolution to
" resist in every form.—But he was so much teased with
" remonstrances on the subject, that he mentioned them as
" having at least *confirmed* his resolution to retire. He
" claimed to himself the merit of having prevented this
" controversy from being agitated in the assemblies; but
" warned me as a young man that it would become the
" chief controversy of my time, and stated to me the rea-
" sons which had determined his opinion on the subject.
" The conversation was probably about 1782 or 1783.—
" I have a distinct recollection of it; though I have no
" idea that his prediction will be verified, as the contro-
" versy seems to be more asleep now than it was a few
" years ago."

NOTE O. p. 128.

The active part which Dr. Robertson took in the foundation of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, is so well known to all the members, that it did not appear necessary to recall it to their recollection. For the information of others, however, it may be proper to observe here, that the first idea of this establishment, and of the plan adopted in its formation, was suggested by him; and that, without his powerful co-operation, there is little probability that the design would ever have been carried into effect.

The zeal with which he promoted the execution of the statistical accounts of Scotland has been publicly acknowledged by Sir John Sinclair; and, on the other hand, I have frequently heard Dr. Robertson express, in the strongest terms, his sense of the obligations which the country lay under to the projector and conductor of that great national work; and the pride with which he reflected on the monument which was thus raised to the information and liberality of the Scottish clergy.

From the following letters it would appear, that he had contributed some aid to the exertions of those who so honourably distinguished themselves a few years ago in the parliamentary discussions about the African trade. His own sentiments on that subject were eloquently stated thirty years before, in the only sermon which he ever published.

From Mr. WILBERFORCE *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Sir, London, 25th January, 1788.

I SHALL not begin by apologizing to you for now presuming to intrude myself on you without introduction, but with condemning myself for not having done it sooner. The subject which is the occasion of my troubling you with this letter, that of the Slave Trade, is one on which I am persuaded our sentiments coincide; and in calling

forth your good offices in such a cause, I trust you will think that whilst I incur I also bestow an obligation.—What I have to request is, that you will have the goodness to communicate to me such facts and observations as may be useful to me in the important task I have undertaken of bringing forward into parliamentary discussion, the situation of that much-injured part of the species, the poor negroes: in common with the rest of my countrymen, I have to complain, that I am under the necessity of betaking myself directly to you for the information I solicit: an application to my bookseller ought to have supplied it: but if there be some ground of charge against you for having failed in your engagements to the public in this particular, it is the rather incumbent on you to attend to the claim of an individual; consider it as a sort of expiation for your offence, and rejoice if so weighty a crime comes off with so light a punishment.—Though the main object I have in view is the prevention of all further exports of slaves from Africa, yet their state in the West Indies, and the most practicable mode of meliorating it, the effects that might follow from this change of system in all its extended and complicated connections and relations, both in Africa and the Western World, and this not only in our own case but in those of other European nations, who might be induced to follow our example; all these come into question, and constitute a burden too heavy for one of powers like mine to bear, without my calling for help where it may be so abundantly afforded: let me add also, that I should be extremely thankful for any intelligence respecting the institutions of the Jesuits in Paraguay, which, it has long struck me, might prove a most useful subject of investigation to any one who would form a plan for the civilization of Africa.—Allow me to add, that I shall wait to hear from you with anxiety, because the business must be brought into the House soon after the meeting.—I will not waste your valuable time by excuses for

this letter, if they are necessary, but once more I will venture to assure myself that you will not think them so.

I have the honour to be, &c.

W. WILBERFORCE.

From Mr. WILBERFORCE *to* Dr. ROBERTSON.

Sir, Hampstead, 20th February, 1788.

I HAVE been honoured with your packets by the post, as well as with your Sermon, and return you my sincerest thanks for your very obliging attention to my request; I am fully sensible to the value of the favourable sentiments you express concerning me, and as one concession always produces a new demand, perhaps you will not be surprised at my now taking the liberty of intimating a hope that I may consider what has passed as constituting a sort of acquaintance between us, which it will give me particular pleasure to indulge an expectation of cultivating, when any opportunity shall allow.

I remain, with great respect and esteem, &c.

W. WILBERFORCE.

NOTE P. p. 132.

Dr. Robertson's second son is now Lieutenant-Colonel of the 92d regiment. His name is repeatedly mentioned with distinction in the History of Lord Cornwallis's Military Operations in India; particularly in the general orders after the siege of Nundydroog, where he commanded in the European flank company that led the assault. The following paragraph from Colonel Dirom's Narrative contains a testimony to his conduct on this occasion, which would have been grateful to the feelings of his father had he survived to peruse it.

" The carnage which must have ensued in clearing the " fort of the enemy, was prevented partly by a number of " the garrison escaping by ropes and ladders over a low

" part of the wall; but chiefly by the exertions of Cap-
" tain Robertson, who, seeing the place was carried, turned
" all his attention to preserving order, and preventing the
" unnecessary effusion of blood. To his humanity the
" bukshey and killedar owed their lives; and of the
" garrison there were only about forty men killed and
" wounded."

Dr. Robertson's youngest son is Lieutenant-Colonel of a regiment serving in Ceylon, and Deputy-Adjutant-General of His Majesty's forces in that island. An account of Ceylon, which he has communicated in manuscript to some of his friends, is said to do great honour to his abilities.

NOTE Q. p. 135.

This request was conveyed to Dr. Robertson by Mr. Dalzel, and was received by him with much sensibility, as a mark of the esteem and approbation of a society over which he had presided for thirty years.

I neglected to mention in a former note the Latin discourses which Dr. Robertson pronounced annually before the University, in compliance with the established practice among his predecessors in office. The first of these was read on the third of February 1763. Its object was to recommend the study of classical learning; and it contained, among a variety of other splendid passages, a beautiful panegyric on the Stoical Philosophy. His second discourse (9th of February 1764) consisted chiefly of moral and literary observations, adapted to the particular circumstances of youth. My friend Mr. Dalzel, who has lately perused these Latin manuscripts with care, observes of this oration, " that the style is uncommonly elegant and
" impressive, and possesses all the distinguishing charac-
" teristics of Dr. Robertson's English compositions."

A third discourse was pronounced on February 14th, 1765; and a fourth on February 20th, 1766. The sub-

ject of both is the same; the question concerning the comparative advantages of public and private education. The execution is such as might be expected from the abilities of the author, exerted on a topic on which he was so eminently fitted to decide, not only by his professional situation and habits, but by an extensive and discriminating knowledge of the world.

These annual discourses (which never failed to produce a strong and happy impression on the mind of his young hearers) he was compelled, after this period, to discontinue by his avocations as an author, and by other engagements which he conceived to be of still greater importance.—It is indeed astonishing that he was able to devote so much time as he did to his academical duties: particularly when we consider that all his works were at first committed to writing in his own hand, and that he seldom, if ever, attempted to dictate to an *amanuensis*.—It may be gratifying to those to whom the literary habits of authors are an object of curiosity to add, that his practice in composition was (according to his own statement in a letter to Mr. Strahan), "to finish as near perfection as he was "able, so that his subsequent alterations were inconsi-"derable."

END OF THE LIFE.

THE

HISTORY

OF

SCOTLAND

DURING THE REIGNS OF

QUEEN MARY and of KING JAMES VI.

TILL

HIS ACCESSION TO THE CROWN OF ENGLAND;

WITH

A REVIEW OF THE SCOTTISH HISTORY PREVIOUS TO THAT PERIOD;
AND AN APPENDIX, CONTAINING ORIGINAL PAPERS.

VOL. I.

THE

HISTORY

OF

SCOTLAND.

BOOK I.

Containing a Review of the SCOTTISH *History previous to the Death of* JAMES V.

BOOK I.

The origin of nations fabulous and obscure.

THE first ages of the Scottish History are dark and fabulous. Nations, as well as men, arrive at maturity by degrees, and the events which happened during their infancy or early youth, cannot be recollected, and deserve not to be remembered. The gross ignorance which anciently covered all the north of Europe, the continual migrations of its inhabitants, and the frequent and destructive revolutions which these occasioned, render it impossible to give any authentic account of the origin of the different kingdoms now established there. Every thing beyond that short period to which well-attested annals reach, is obscure; an immense space is left for invention to occupy; each nation, with a vanity inseparable from human nature, hath filled that void with events calculated to display its own antiquity and lustre. History, which ought to record truth

BOOK I. and to teach wisdom, often sets out with retailing fictions and absurdities.

Origin of the Scots.

The Scots carry their pretensions to antiquity as high as any of their neighbours. Relying upon uncertain legends, and the traditions of their bards, still more uncertain, they reckon up a series of Kings several ages before the birth of Christ; and give a particular detail of the occurences which happened in their reigns. But with regard to the Scots, as well as the other northern nations, we receive the earliest accounts on which we can depend, not from

A.D. 81. their own, but from the Roman authors. When the Romans, under Agricola, first carried their arms into the northern parts of Britain, they found it possessed by the Caledonians, a fierce and warlike people; and having repulsed rather than conquered them, they erected a strong wall between the firths of Forth and Clyde, and there fixed the bound-

A.D. 121. aries of their empire. Adrian, on account of the difficulty of defending such a distant frontier, contracted the limits of the Roman province in Britain, by building a second wall, which ran between Newcastle and Carlisle. The ambition of succeeding Emperors endeavoured to recover what Adrian had abandoned; and the country between the two walls was alternately under the dominion of the Romans and that of the Caledonians. About the beginning of the fifth century, the inroads of the Goths and other barbarians obliged the Romans, in order to defend the centre of their empire, to recall those legions which guarded the frontier provinces; and at that time they quitted all their conquests in Britain.

Their long residence in the island had polished, in some degree, the rude inhabitants, and the Britons were indebted to their intercourse with the Romans, for the art of writing, and the use of numbers, without which it is impossible long to preserve the memory of past events. BOOK I. A. D. 421.

North Britain was, by their retreat, left under the dominion of the Scots and Picts. The former, who are not mentioned by any Roman author before the end of the fourth century, were probably a colony of the Celtæ or Gauls; their affinity to whom appears from their language, their manners, and religious rites; circumstances more decisive with regard to the origin of nations, than either fabulous traditions, or the tales of ill-informed and credulous annalists. The Scots, if we may believe the common accounts, settled at first in Ireland; and, extending themselves by degrees, landed at last on the coast opposite to that island, and fixed their habitations there. Fierce and bloody wars were, during several ages, carried on between them and the Picts. At length, Kenneth II., the sixty-ninth King of the Scots, (according to their own fabulous authors,) obtained a complete victory over the Picts, and united under one monarchy, all the country from the wall of Adrian to the northern ocean. The kingdom henceforward became known by its present name, which is derived from a people who at first settled there as strangers, and remained long obscure and inconsiderable. A. D. 838.

From this period the History of Scotland would merit some attention, were it accompanied with any certainty. But as our remote antiquities are in- History of Scotland peculiarly obscure.

BOOK I. volved in the same darkness with those of other nations, a calamity peculiar to ourselves has thrown almost an equal obscurity over our more recent transactions. This was occasioned by the malicious policy of Edward I. of England. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, this monarch called in question the independence of Scotland; pretending that the kingdom was held as a fief of the crown of England, and subjected to all the conditions of a feudal tenure. In order to establish his claim, he seized the public archives, he ransacked churches and monasteries, and getting possession, by force or fraud, of many historical monuments, which tended to prove the antiquity or freedom of the kingdom, he carried some of them into England, and commanded the rest to be burned[a]. An universal oblivion of past transactions might have been the effect of this fatal event, but some imperfect Chronicles had escaped the rage of Edward; foreign writers had recorded some important facts relating to Scotland; and the traditions concerning recent occurrences were fresh and worthy of credit. These broken fragments John de Fordun, who lived in the fourteenth century, collected with a pious industry, and from them gleaned materials which he formed into a regular history. His work was received by his countrymen with applause: and, as no recourse could be had to more ancient records, it supplied the place of the authentic annals of the kingdom. It was copied in many monasteries, and the thread of the narrative was continued, by different monks, through the subsequent reigns. In the beginning

Innes, Essay 552.

of the sixteenth century, John Major and Hector Boethius published their Histories of Scotland, the former a succinct and dry writer, the latter a copious and florid one, and both equally credulous. Not many years after, Buchanan undertook the same work; and if his accuracy and impartiality had been, in any degree, equal to the elegance of his taste, and to the purity and vigour of his style, his History might be placed on a level with the most admired compositions of the ancients. But, instead of rejecting the improbable tales of chronicle-writers, he was at the utmost pains to adorn them; and hath clothed, with all the beauties and graces of fiction, those legends, which formerly had only its wildness and extravagance.

Four remarkable æras in the Scottish history.

The History of Scotland may properly be divided into four periods. The first reaches from the origin of the monarchy to the reign of Kenneth II. The second, from Kenneth's conquest of the Picts to the death of Alexander III. The third extends to the death of James V. The last, from thence to the accession of James VI. to the crown of England.

The first period is the region of pure fable and conjecture, and ought to be totally neglected, or abandoned to the industry and credulity of antiquaries. Truth begins to dawn in the second period, with a light, feeble at first, but gradually increasing, and the events which then happened may be slightly touched, but merit no particular or laborious inquiry. In the third period, the History of Scotland, chiefly by means of records preserved in England, becomes more authentic: not only are events related, but their causes and effects explained; the

BOOK I. characters of the actors are displayed; the manners of the age described; the revolutions in the constitution pointed out: and here every Scotsman should begin not to read only, but to study the history of his country. During the fourth period, the affairs of Scotland were so mingled with those of other nations, its situation in the political state of Europe was so important, its influence on the operations of the neighbouring kingdoms was so visible, that its history becomes an object of attention to foreigners; and without some knowledge of the various and extraordinary revolutions which happened there, they cannot form a just notion with respect either to the most illustrious events, or to the characters of the most distinguished personages in the sixteenth century.

A review of the third æra.

The following history is confined to the last of these periods: to give a view of the political state of the kingdom during that which immediately preceded it, is the design of this preliminary Book. The imperfect knowledge which strangers have of the affairs of Scotland, and the prejudices Scotsmen themselves have imbibed with regard to the various revolutions in the government of their country, render such an introduction equally necessary to both.

The period from the death of Alexander III. to the death of James V. contains upwards of two centuries and a half, from the year one thousand two hundred and eighty-six to the year one thousand five hundred and forty-two.

Rise of the controversy concerning

It opens with the famous controversy concerning the independence of Scotland. Before the union of the two kingdoms, this was a question of much

the independence of Scotland.

importance. If the one crown had been considered not as imperial and independent, but as feudatory to the other, a treaty of union could not have been concluded on equal terms, and every advantage which the dependent kingdom procured, must have been deemed the concession of a sovereign to his vassal. Accordingly, about the beginning of the present century, and while a treaty of union between the two kingdoms was negotiating, this controversy was agitated with all the heat which national animosities naturally inspire. What was then the subject of serious concern, the union of the two kingdoms had rendered a matter of mere curiosity. But though the objects which at that time warmed and interested both nations, exist no longer, a question which appeared so momentous to our ancestors cannot be altogether indifferent or uninstructive to us.

Some of the northern counties of England were early in the hands of the Scottish Kings, who, as far back as the feudal customs can be traced, held these possessions of the Kings of England, and did homage to them on that account. This homage, due only for the territories which they held in England, was in no wise derogatory from their royal dignity. Nothing is more suitable to feudal ideas, than that the same person should be both a lord and a vassal, independent in one capacity, and dependent in another[b]. The crown of England was, without doubt,

[b] A very singular proof of this occurs in the French history. Arpin sold the vicomté of the city of Bourges to Philip I. who did homage to the Count of Sancerre for a part of these lands, which held of that nobleman, A. D. 1100. I believe that no example

BOOK I. imperial and independent, though the Princes who wore it were, for many ages, the vassals of the Kings of France; and, in consequence of their possessions in that kingdom, bound to perform all the services which a feudal sovereign has a title to exact. The same was the condition of the Monarchs of Scotland; free and independent as Kings of their own country, but, as possessing English territories, vassals to the King of England. The English Monarchs, satisfied with their legal and uncontroverted rights, were, during a long period, neither capable, nor had any thoughts, of usurping more. England when conquered by the Saxons, being divided by them into many small kingdoms, was in no condition to extend its dominion over Scotland, united at that time under one monarch. And though these petty principalities were gradually formed into one kingdom, the reigning Princes, exposed to continual invasions of the Danes, and often subjected to the yoke of those formidable pirates, seldom turned their arms towards Scotland, and were little able to establish new rights in that country. The first Kings of the Norman race, busied with introducing their own laws and manners into the kingdom which they had conquered, or with maintaining themselves on the throne which some of them possessed by a very

of a King's doing homage to one of his own subjects, is to be met with in the histories either of England or Scotland. Philip le Bel abolished this practice in France, A. D. 1302. Henault *Abregé Chronol.* Somewhat similar to this, is a charter of the Abbot of Melross, A. D. 1535, constituting James V. the Bailiff or Steward of that Abbey, vesting in him all the powers which pertained to that office, and requiring him to be answerable to the Abbot for his exercise of the same. *Archiv. publ. Edin.*

dubious title, were as little solicitous to acquire new authority, or to form new pretensions in Scotland. An unexpected calamity that befell one of the Scottish Kings first encouraged the English to think of bringing his kingdom under dependence. William, surnamed the Lion, being taken prisoner at Alnwick, Henry II. as the price of his liberty, not only extorted from him an exorbitant ransom, and a promise to surrender the places of greatest strength in his dominions, but compelled him to do homage for his whole kingdom. Richard I., a generous Prince, solemnly renounced this claim of homage; and absolved William from the hard conditions which Henry had imposed. Upon the death of Alexander III., near a century after, Edward I., availing himself of the situation of affairs in Scotland, acquired an influence in that kingdom, which no English Monarch before him ever possessed, and imitating the interested policy of Henry, rather than the magnanimity of Richard, revived the claim of sovereignty to which the former had pretended.

Pretensions of Bruce and Baliol examined.

Margaret of Norway, grand-daughter of Alexander, and heir to his crown, did not long survive him. The right of succession belonged to the descendants of David Earl of Huntingdon, third son of King David I. Among these, Robert Bruce and John Baliol, two illustrious competitors for the crown, appeared. Bruce was the son of Isabel, Earl David's second daughter; Baliol, the grandson of Margaret the eldest daughter. According to the rules of succession which are now established, the right of Baliol was preferable; and notwithstanding Bruce's plea of being nearer in blood to Earl David,

BOOK I. Baliol's claim, as the representative of his mother and grandmother, would be deemed incontestable. But in that age the order of succession was not ascertained with the same precision. The question appeared to be no less intricate than it was important. Though the prejudices of the people, and perhaps the laws of the kingdom, favoured Bruce, each of the rivals was supported by a powerful faction. Arms alone, it was feared, must terminate a dispute too weighty for the laws to decide. But, in order to avoid the miseries of a civil war, Edward was chosen umpire, and both parties agreed to acquiesce in his decree. This had well nigh proved fatal to the independence of Scotland; and the nation, by its eagerness to guard against a civil war, was not only exposed to that calamity, but almost subjected to a foreign yoke. Edward was artful, brave, enterprising, and commanded a powerful and martial people, at peace with the whole world. The anarchy which prevailed in Scotland, and the ambition of competitors ready to sacrifice their country in order to obtain even a dependent crown, invited him first to seize and then to subject the kingdom. The authority of an umpire, which had been unwarily bestowed upon him, and from which the Scots dreaded no dangerous consequences, enabled him to execute his schemes with the greater facility. Under pretence of examining the question with the utmost solemnity, he summoned all the Scottish Barons to Norham; and having gained some and intimidated others, he prevailed on all who were present, not excepting Bruce and Baliol, the competitors, to acknowledge Scotland to be a fief of the

English Crown, and to swear fealty to him as their *Sovereign* or *Liege Lord*. This step led to another still more important. As it was vain to pronounce a sentence which he had not power to execute, Edward demanded possession of the kingdom, that he might be able to deliver it to him whose right should be found preferable; and such was the pusillanimity of the nobles, and the impatient ambition of the competitors, that both assented to this strange demand, and Gilbert de Umfraville, Earl of Angus, was the only man who refused to surrender the castles in his custody to the enemy of his country. Edward, finding Baliol the most obsequious and the least formidable of the two competitors, soon after gave judgement in his favour. Baliol once more professed himself the vassal of England, and submitted to every condition which the Sovereign whom he had now acknowledged was pleased to prescribe.

Edward, having thus placed a creature of his own upon the throne of Scotland, and compelled the nobles to renounce the ancient liberties and independence of their country, had reason to conclude that his dominion was now fully established. But he began too soon to assume the master: his new vassals, fierce and independent, bore with impatience a yoke to which they were not accustomed. Provoked by his haughtiness, even the passive spirit of Baliol began to mutiny. But Edward, who had no longer use for such a pageant King, forced him to resign the crown, and openly attempted to seize it as fallen to himself by the rebellion of his vassal. At that critical period arose Sir William Wallace,

BOOK I. a hero, to whom the fond admiration of his countrymen hath ascribed many fabulous acts of prowess, though his real valour, as well as integrity and wisdom, are such as need not the heightenings of fiction. He, almost single, ventured to take arms in defence of the kingdom, and his boldness revived the spirit of his countrymen. At last, Robert Bruce, the grandson of him who stood in competition with Baliol, appeared to assert his own rights, and to vindicate the honour of his country. The nobles, ashamed of their former baseness, and enraged at the many indignities offered to the nation, crowded to his standard. In order to crush him at once, the English Monarch entered Scotland at the head of a mighty army. Many battles were fought, and the Scots, though often vanquished, were not subdued. The ardent zeal with which the nobles contended for the independence of the kingdom, the prudent valour of Bruce, and above all a national enthusiasm inspired by such a cause, baffled the repeated efforts of Edward, and counterbalanced all the advantages which he derived from the number and wealth of his subjects. Though the war continued with little intermission upwards of seventy years, Bruce and his posterity kept possession of the throne of Scotland, and reigned with an authority not inferior to that of its former monarchs.

But while the sword, the ultimate judge of all disputes between contending nations, was employed to terminate this controversy, neither Edward nor the Scots seemed to distrust the justice of their cause; and both appealed to history and records, and from these produced, in their own favour, such

evidence as they pretended to be unanswerable. The letters and memorials addressed by each party to the Pope, who was then reverenced as the common father, and often appealed to as the common judge of all Christian Princes, are still extant. The fabulous tales of the early British history, the partial testimony of ignorant Chroniclers, supposititious treaties and charters, are the proofs on which Edward founded his title to the sovereignty of Scotland; and the homage done by the Scottish Monarchs for their lands in England is preposterously supposed to imply the subjection of their whole kingdom[c]. Ill-founded, however, as their right was, the English did not fail to revive it, in all the subsequent quarrels between the two kingdoms; while the Scots disclaimed it with the utmost indignation. To this we must impute the fierce and implacable hatred to each other, which long inflamed both. Their national antipathies were excited, not only by the usual circumstances of frequent hostilities, and reciprocal injuries; but the English considered the Scots as vassals who had presumed to rebel; and the Scots, in their turn, regarded the English as usurpers who aimed at enslaving their country.

1306. State of the kingdom when Bruce began his reign.

At the time when Robert Bruce began his reign in Scotland, the same form of government was established in all the kingdoms of Europe. This surprising similarity in their constitution and laws demonstrates that the nations which overturned the Roman empire, and erected these kingdoms, though

[c] Anderson's Historical Essay concerning the Independency, &c.

BOOK I. divided into different tribes and distinguished by different names, were either derived originally from the same source, or had been placed in similar situations. When we take a view of the feudal system of laws and policy, that stupendous and singular fabric erected by them, the first object that strikes us is the King. And when we are told that he is the sole proprietor of all the lands within his dominions, that all his subjects derive their possessions from him, and in return consecrate their lives to his service; when we hear that all marks of distinction, and titles of dignity, flow from him as the only fountain of honour; when we behold the most potent peers, on their bended knees, and with folded hands, swearing fealty at his feet, and acknowledging him to be their *Sovereign* and their *Liege Lord*; we are apt to pronounce him a powerful, nay an absolute monarch. No conclusion, however, would be more rash, or worse founded. The genius of the feudal government was purely aristocratical. With all the ensigns of royalty, and with many appearances of despotic power, a feudal King was the most limited of all Princes.

Origin of the feudal government, and its aristocratical genius.

Before they sallied out of their own habitations to conquer the world, many of the northern nations seemed not to have been subject to the government of Kings[d]; and even where monarchical government was established, the Prince possessed but little authority. A General, rather than a King, his military command was extensive, his civil jurisdiction almost nothing[e]. The army which he led

[d] Cæs. lib. vi. c. 23. [e] Tacit. de Mor. Germ. c. 7. 11.

was not composed of soldiers, who could be compelled to serve, but of such as voluntarily followed his standard[f]. These conquered not for their leader, but for themselves; and, being free in their own country, renounced not their liberty when they acquired new settlements. They did not exterminate the ancient inhabitants of the countries which they subdued; but, seizing the greater part of their lands, they took their persons under protection. The difficulty of maintaining a new conquest, as well as the danger of being attacked by new invaders, rendering it necessary to be always in a posture of defence, the form of government which they established was altogether military, and nearly resembled that to which they had been accustomed in their native country. Their General still continuing to be the head of the colony, part of the conquered lands were allotted to him; the remainder, under the name of *beneficia* or *fiefs*, was divided among his principal officers. As the common safety required that these officers should, upon all occasions, be ready to appear in arms, for the common defence, and should continue obedient to their General, they bound themselves to take the field, when called, and to serve him with a number of men, in proportion to the extent of their territory. These great officers again parcelled out their lands among their followers, and annexed the same condition to the grant. A feudal kingdom was properly the encampment of a great army; military ideas predominated, military subordination was es-

[f] Cæs. lib. vi. c. 23.

BOOK I. tablished, and the possession of land was the pay which soldiers received for their personal service. In consequence of these notions, the possession of land was granted during pleasure only, and Kings were elective. In other words, an officer disagreeable to his General was deprived of his pay, and the person who was most capable of conducting an army was chosen to command it. Such were the first rudiments or infancy of feudal government.

But long before the beginning of the fourteenth century, the feudal system had undergone many changes, of which the following were the most considerable. Kings, formerly elective, were then hereditary; and fiefs, granted at first during pleasure, descended from father to son, and were become perpetual. These changes, not less advantageous to the nobles than to the prince, made no alteration in the aristocratical spirit of the feudal constitution. The King, who at a distance seemed to be invested with majesty and power, appears on a nearer view to possess almost none of those advantages which bestow on monarchs their grandeur and authority. His revenues were scanty; he had not a standing army; and the jurisdiction he possessed was circumscribed within very narrow limits.

General causes which limited the power of the feudal monarchs.

Their revenues were small.

At a time when pomp and splendour were little known, even in the palaces of Kings; when the officers of the crown received scarcely any salary besides the fees and perquisites of their office; when embassies to foreign courts were rare; when armies were composed of soldiers who served without pay; it was not necessary that a King should possess a great revenue; nor did the condition of Europe, in

those ages, allow its Princes to be opulent. Commerce made little progress in the kingdoms where the feudal government was established. Institutions which had no other object but to inspire a martial spirit, to train men to be soldiers, and to make arms the only honourable profession, naturally discouraged the commercial arts. The revenues, arising from the taxes imposed on the different branches of commerce, were by consequence inconsiderable; and the Prince's treasury received little supply from a source, which, among a trading people, flows with such abundance, as is almost inexhaustible. A fixed tax was not levied even on land: such a burden would have appeared intolerable to men who received their estates as the reward of their valour, and who considered their service in the field as a full retribution for what they possessed. The King's *demesnes*, or the portion of land which he still retained in his own hands unalienated, furnished subsistence to his court, and defrayed the ordinary expence of government[g]. The only stated taxes which the feudal law obliged vassals to pay to the King, or to those of whom they held their lands, were three: one when his eldest son was made a knight; another, when his eldest daughter was married; and a third, in order to ransom him if he should happen to be taken prisoner. Besides these, the King received the feudal casualties of the ward, marriage, &c. of his own vassals. And, on some extraordinary occasions, his subjects granted him an aid, which they distinguished by the name of a *benevolence*, in order to declare that

[g] Craig. de Feud. lib. i. Dieg. 14. Du Cange Gloss. voc. Dominicum.

BOOK I. he received it not in consequence of any right, but as a gift flowing from their good will[h]. All these added together, produced a revenue so scanty and precarious, as naturally incited a feudal monarch to aim at diminishing the exorbitant power and wealth of the nobility, but, instead of enabling him to carry on his schemes with full effect, kept him in continual indigence, anxiety, and dependence.

They had no standing armies.

Nor could the King supply the defect of his revenues by the terror of his arms. Mercenary troops and standing armies were unknown as long as the feudal government subsisted in vigour. Europe was peopled with soldiers. The vassals of the King, and the sub-vassals of the barons, were all obliged to carry arms. While the poverty of Princes prevented them from fortifying their frontier towns, while a campaign continued but a few weeks, and while a fierce and impetuous courage was impatient to bring every quarrel to the decision of a battle, an army without pay, and with little discipline, was sufficient for all the purposes both of the security and of the glory of the nation. Such an army, however, far from being an engine at the King's disposal, was often no less formidable to him than to his enemies. The more warlike any people were, the more independent they became; and the same persons being both soldiers and subjects, civil privileges and immunities were the consequence of their victories, and the reward of their martial exploits. Conquerors, whom mercenary armies, under our present forms of government, often render the tyrants

[h] Du Cange, voc. Auxilium.

of their own people, as well as the scourges of mankind, were commonly under the feudal constitution the most indulgent of all Princes to their subjects, because they stood most in need of their assistance. A Prince, whom even war and victories did not render the master of his own army, possessed hardly any shadow of military power during times of peace. His disbanded soldiers mingled with his other subjects; not a single man received pay from him; many ages elapsed even before a guard was appointed to defend his person; and destitute of that great instrument of dominion, a standing army, the authority of the King continued always feeble, and was often contemptible.

Their jurisdiction was limited.

Nor were these the only circumstances which contributed towards depressing the regal power. By the feudal system, as has been already observed, the King's judicial authority was extremely circumscribed. At first, Princes seem to have been the supreme judges of their people, and, in person, heard and determined all controversies among them. The multiplicity of causes soon made it necessary to appoint judges, who, in the King's name, decided matters that belonged to the royal jurisdiction. But the barbarians, who over-ran Europe, having destroyed most of the great cities, and the countries which they seized being cantoned out among powerful chiefs, who were blindly followed by numerous dependants, whom, in return, they were bound to protect from every injury; the administration of justice was greatly interrupted, and the execution of any legal sentence became almost impracticable. Theft, rapine, murder, and disorder of all kinds prevailed

BOOK I. in every kingdom of Europe, to a degree almost incredible, and scarcely compatible with the subsistence of civil society. Every offender sheltered himself under the protection of some powerful chieftain, who screened him from the pursuits of justice. To apprehend and to punish a criminal, often required the union and effort of half a kingdom[i]. In order to remedy these evils, many persons of distinction were entrusted with the administration of justice within their own territories. But what we may presume was, at first, only a temporary grant, or a personal privilege, the incroaching spirit of the nobles gradually converted into a right, and ren-

[i] A remarkable instance of this occurs in the following history, so late as the year one thousand five hundred and sixty-one. Mary, having appointed a court of justice to be held on the borders, the inhabitants of no less than eleven counties were summoned to guard the person who was to act as judge, and to enable him to enforce his decisions. The words of a proclamation, which afford such convincing proof of the feebleness of the feudal government, deserve our notice—"And because it is necessary for the execution of Her Highness' commandments and service, that her justice be well accompanied, and her authority sufficiently fortified, by the concurrence of a good power of her faithful subjects—Therefore commands and charges all and sundry Earls, Lords, Barons, Freeholders, Landed-men, and other Gentlemen, dwelling within the said counties, that they and every one of them, with their kin, friends, servants, and household-men, well bodin in feir of war in the most substantious manner, [i. e. completely armed and provided,] and with twenty days' victuals, to meet and to pass forward with him to the borough of Jedburgh, and there to remain during the said space of twenty days, and to receive such direction and commands as shall be given by him to them in our Sovereign Lady's name, for quietness of the country: and to put the same in execution under the pain of losing their life, lands, and goods." Keith's Hist. of Scotland, 198.

dered hereditary. The lands of some were, in process of time, erected into *Baronies*, those of others into *Regalities*. The jurisdiction of the former was extensive; that of the latter, as the name implies, royal and almost unbounded. All causes, whether civil or criminal, were tried by judges, whom the lord of the regality appointed; and if the King's courts called any person within his territory before them, the lord of regality might put a stop to their proceedings, and, by the priviledge of *repledging*, remove the cause to his own court, and even punish his vassal if he submitted to a foreign jurisdiction[k]. Thus almost every question, in which any person who resided on the lands of the nobles was interested, being determined by judges appointed by the nobles themselves, their vassals were hardly sensible of being in any degree subject to the crown. A feudal kingdom was split into many small principalities, almost independent, and held together by a feeble and commonly an imperceptible bond of union. The King was not only stripped of the authority annexed to the person of a supreme judge, but his revenue suffered no small diminution by the loss of those pecuniary emoluments which were in that age due to the person who administered justice.

In the same proportion that the King sunk in power, the nobles rose towards independence. Not satisfied with having obtained a hereditary right to their fiefs, which they formerly held during pleasure, their ambition aimed at something bolder, and, by introducing *entails*, endeavoured, as far as human

[k] Craig, lib. iii. Dieg. 7.

BOOK I. ingenuity and invention can reach that end, to render their possessions unalienable and everlasting. As they had full power to add to the inheritance transmitted to them from their ancestors, but none to diminish it, time alone, by means of marriages, legacies, and other accidents, brought continual accessions of wealth and of dignity; a great family, like a river, became considerable from the length of its course, and, as it rolled on, new honours and new property flowed successively into it. Whatever influence is derived from titles of honour, the feudal barons likewise possessed in an ample manner. These marks of distinction are, in their own nature, either official or personal, and being annexed to a particular charge, or bestowed by the admiration of mankind upon illustrious characters, ought to be appropriated to these. But the son, however unworthy, could not bear to be stripped of that appellation by which his father had been distinguished. His presumption claimed what his virtue did not merit; titles of honour became hereditary, and added new lustre to nobles already in possession of too much power. Something more audacious and more extravagant still remained. The supreme direction of all affairs, both civil and military, being committed to the great officers of the crown, the fame and safety of princes, as well as of their people, depended upon the fidelity and abilities of these officers. But such was the preposterous ambition of the nobles, and so successful even in their wildest attempts to aggrandize themselves, that in all the kingdoms where the feudal institutions prevailed, most of the chief officers of state

were annexed to great families, and held, like fiefs, by hereditary right. A person whose undutiful behaviour rendered him odious to his Prince, or whose incapacity exposed him to the contempt of the people, often held a place of power and trust of the greatest importance to both. In Scotland, the offices of Lord Justice General, Great Chamberlain, High Steward, High Constable, Earl Marshal, and High Admiral, were all hereditary; and in many counties, the office of Sheriff was held in the same manner.

Nobles whose property was so extensive, and whose power was so great, could not fail of being turbulent and formidable. Nor did they want instruments for executing their boldest designs. That portion of their lands, which they parcelled out among their followers, supplied them with a numerous band of faithful and determined vassals; while that which they retained in their own hands, enabled them to live with a princely splendor. The great hall of an ambitious baron was often more crowded than the court of his sovereign. The strong castles, in which they resided, afforded a secure retreat to the discontented and seditious. A great part of their revenue was spent upon multitudes of indigent but bold retainers. And if at any time they left their retreat to appear in the court of their sovereign, they were accompanied, even in times of peace, with a vast train of armed followers. The usual retinue of William the sixth Earl of Douglas consisted of two thousand horse. Those of the other nobles were magnificent and formidable in proportion. Impatient of subordination, and for-

BOOK I. getting their proper rank, such potent and haughty barons were the rivals rather than the subjects of their prince. They often despised his orders, insulted his person, aud wrested from him his crown. The history of Europe, during several ages, contains little else but the accounts of the wars and revolutions occasioned by their exorbitant ambition.

Their power greater in Scotland than in any other kingdom.

But, if the authority of the barons far exceeded its proper bounds in the other nations of Europe, we may affirm that the balance which ought to be preserved between a King and his nobles was almost entirely lost in Scotland. The Scottish nobles enjoyed, in common with those of other nations, all the means for extending their authority which arise from the aristocratical genius of the feudal government. Besides these, they possessed advantages peculiar to themselves: the accidental sources of their power were considerable; and singular circumstances concurred with the spirit of the constitution to aggrandize them. To enumerate the most remarkable of these, will serve both to explain the political state of the kingdom, and to illustrate many important occurrences, in the period now under our review.

The particular causes of this.

The nature of the country.

I. The nature of their country was one cause of the power and independence of the Scottish nobility. Level and open countries are formed for servitude. The authority of the supreme magistrate reaches with ease to the most distant corners; and when nature has erected no barrier, and affords no retreat, the guilty or obnoxious are soon detected and punished. Mountains, and fens, and rivers, set bounds to despotic power, and amidst these is

the natural seat of freedom and independence. In such places did the Scottish nobles usually fix their residence. By retiring to his own castle, a mutinous baron could defy the power of his sovereign, it being almost impracticable to lead an army, through a barren country, to places of difficult access to a single man. The same causes which checked the progress of the Roman arms, and rendered all the efforts of Edward I. abortive, often protected the Scottish nobles from the vengeance of their Prince; and they owed their personal independence to those very mountains and marshes which saved their country from being conquered.

The small number of great cities.

II. The want of great cities in Scotland contributed not a little to increase the power of the nobility, and to weaken that of the Prince. Wherever numbers of men assemble together, order must be established, and a regular form of government instituted; the authority of the magistrate must be recognised, and his decisions meet with prompt and full obedience. Laws and subordination take rise in cities: and where there are few cities, as in Poland, or none, as in Tartary, there are few or no traces of a well arranged police. But under the feudal governments, commerce, the chief means of assembling mankind, was neglected; the nobles, in order to strengthen their influence over their vassals, resided among them, and seldom appeared at court, where they found a superior, or dwelt in cities, where they met with equals. In Scotland, the fertile counties in the South lying open to the English, no town situated there could rise to be great or po-

BOOK I. pulous, amidst continual inroads and alarms; the residence of our monarchs was not fixed to any particular place; many parts of the country were barren and uncultivated; and in consequence of these peculiar circumstances, added to the general causes flowing from the nature of the feudal institutions, the towns in Scotland were extremely few, and very inconsiderable. The vassals of every baron occupied a distinct portion of the kingdom, and formed a separate and almost independent society. Instead of giving aid towards reducing to obedience their seditious chieftain, or any whom he took under his protection, they were all in arms for his defence, and obstructed the operations of justice to the utmost. The Prince was obliged to connive at criminals whom he could not reach; the nobles, conscious of this advantage, were not afraid to offend; and the difficulty of punishing almost assured them of impunity.

The institution of clans.

III. The division of the country into clans had no small effect in rendering the nobles considerable. The nations which over-ran Europe were originally divided into many small tribes; and when they came to parcel out the lands which they had conquered, it was natural for every chieftain to bestow a portion, in the first place, upon those of his own tribe or family. These all held their lands of him; and as the safety of each individual depended on the general union, these small societies clung together, and were distinguished by some common appellation, either patronymical or local, long before the introduction of surnames, or *ensigns armorial*. But when these became common, the descendants

and relations of every chieftain assumed the same name and arms with him; other vassals were proud to imitate their example, and by degrees they were communicated to all those who held of the same superior. Thus clanships were formed; and in a generation or two, that consanguinity, which was at first in a great measure imaginary, was believed to be real. An artificial union was converted into a natural one; men willingly followed a leader, whom they regarded both as the superior of their lands and the chief of their blood, and served him not only with the fidelity of vassals, but with the affection of friends. In the other feudal kingdoms, we may observe such unions as we have described, imperfectly formed; but in Scotland, whether they were the production of chance, or the effect of policy, or introduced by the Irish colony above mentioned, and strengthened by carefully preserving their genealogies both genuine and fabulous, clanships were universal. Such a confederacy might be overcome, it could not be broken; and no change of manners, or of government, has been able, in some parts of the kingdom, to dissolve associations which are founded upon prejudices so natural to the human mind. How formidable were nobles at the head of followers, who, counting that cause just and honourable which their chief approved, rushed into the field at his command, ever ready to sacrifice their lives in defence of his person or of his fame! Against such men a King contended with great disadvantage; and that cold service which money purchases, or authority extorts, was not an equal match for their ardour and zeal.

BOOK I.

The small number of the nobles.

IV. The smallness of their number may be mentioned among the causes of the grandeur of the Scottish nobles. Our annals reach not back to the first division of property in the kingdom; but so far as we can trace the matter, the original possessions of the nobles seem to have been extensive. The ancient Thanes were the equals and the rivals of their Prince. Many of the earls and barons, who succeeded them, were masters of territories no less ample. France and England, countries wide and fertile, afforded settlements to a numerous and powerful nobility. Scotland, a kingdom neither extensive nor rich, could not contain many such overgrown proprietors. But the power of an aristocracy always diminishes in proportion to the increase of its numbers; feeble if divided among a multitude, irresistible if centred in a few. When nobles are numerous, their operations nearly resemble those of the people; they are roused only by what they feel, not by what they apprehend; and submit to many arbitrary and oppressive acts, before they take arms against their sovereign. A small body, on the contrary, is more sensible and more impatient; quick in discerning, and prompt in repelling danger, all its motions are as sudden as those of the other are slow. Hence proceeded the extreme jealousy with which the Scottish nobles observed their monarchs, and the fierceness with which they opposed their incroachments. Even the virtue of a prince did not render them less vigilant, or less eager to defend their rights; and Robert Bruce, notwithstanding the splendour of his victories, and the glory of his name, was upon the point

of experiencing the vigour of their resistance, no less than his unpopular descendant James III. Besides this, the near alliance of the great families, by frequent intermarriages, was the natural consequence of their small number; and as consanguinity was, in those ages, a powerful bond of union, all the kindred of a nobleman interested themselves in his quarrel, as a common cause; and every contest the King had, though with a single baron, soon drew upon him the arms of a whole confederacy.

Their leagues and combinations.

V. Those natural connexions, both with their equals and with their inferiors, the Scottish nobles strengthened by a device, which, if not peculiar to themselves, was at least more frequent among them than in any other nation. Even in times of profound peace, they formed associations, which, when made with their equals, were called *leagues of mutual defence;* and when with their inferiors, *bonds of manrent*. By the former, the contracting parties bound themselves mutually to assist each other, in all causes, and against all persons. By the latter, protection was stipulated on the one hand, and fidelity and personal service promised on the other[1]. Self-preservation, it is probable, forced men at first into these confederacies; and, while disorder and rapine were universal, while government was unsettled, and the authority of laws little known or regarded, near neighbours found it necessary to unite in this manner for their security; and the weak were obliged to court the patronage of the strong. By degrees, these associations became so many alli-

[1] Act 30. Parl. 1424. Act 43. Parl. 1555.

BOOK I.

ances offensive and defensive against the throne; and, as their obligation was held to be more sacred than any tie whatever, they gave much umbrage to our Kings, and contributed not a little to the power and independence of the nobility. In the reign of James II. William, the eighth Earl of Douglas, entered into a league of this kind with the Earls of Crawford, Ross, Murray, Ormond, the Lords Hamilton, Balveny, and other powerful barons; and so formidable was this combination to the King, that he had recourse to a measure no less violent than unjust, in order to dissolve it.

The frequent wars with England.

VI. The frequent wars between England and Scotland proved another cause of augmenting the power of the nobility. Nature has placed no barrier between the two kingdoms; a river, almost every where fordable, divides them towards the east; on the west they are separated by an imaginary line. The slender revenues of our Kings prevented them from fortifying, or placing garrisons in the towns on the frontier; nor would the jealousy of their subjects have permitted such a method of defence. The barons, whose estates lay near the borders, considered themselves as bound, both in honour and in interest, to repel the enemy. The *wardenships* of the different *marches*, offices of great power and dignity, were generally bestowed on them. This gained them the leading of the warlike counties in the south; and their vassals, living in a state of perpetual hostility, or enjoying at best an insecure peace, became more inured to war than even the rest of their countrymen, and more willing to accompany their chieftain in his most hardy and dan-

gerous enterprises. It was the valour, no less than the number of their followers, that rendered the Douglases great. The nobles in the northern and midland counties were often dutiful and obsequious to the crown, but our Monarchs always found it impracticable to subdue the mutinous and ungovernable spirit of the borderers. In all our domestic quarrels, those who could draw to their side the inhabitants of the southern counties, were almost sure of victory: and, conscious of this advantage, the lords who possessed authority there, were apt to forget the duty which they owed their sovereign, and to aspire beyond the rank of subjects.

The frequent minorities which happened in Scotland.

VII. The calamities which befel our Kings contributed more than any other cause to diminish the royal authority. Never was any race of monarchs so unfortunate as the Scottish. Of six successive Princes, from Robert III. to James VI., not one died a natural death; and the minorities, during that time, were longer and more frequent, than ever happened in any other kingdom. From Robert Bruce to James VI. we reckon ten Princes; and seven of these were called to the throne while they were minors, and almost infants. Even the most regular and best established governments feel sensibly the pernicious effects of a minority, and either become languid and inactive, or are thrown into violent and unnatural convulsions. But under the imperfect and ill-adjusted system of government in Scotland these effects were still more fatal; the fierce and mutinous spirit of the nobles, unrestrained by the authority of a King, scorned all subjection to the delegated jurisdiction of a Regent, or to the

BOOK I.

feeble commands of a minor. The royal authority was circumscribed within narrower limits than ever; the prerogatives of the crown, naturally inconsiderable, were reduced almost to nothing; and the aristocratical power gradually rose upon the ruins of the monarchical. Lest the personal power of a Regent should enable him to act with too much vigour, the authority annexed to that office was sometimes rendered inconsiderable by being divided; or, if a single Regent was chosen, the greater nobles, and the heads of the more illustrious families, were seldom raised to that dignity. It was often conferred upon men who possessed little influence, and excited no jealousy. They, conscious of their own weakness, were obliged to overlook some irregularities, and to permit others; and, in order to support their authority, which was destitute of real strength, they endeavoured to gain the most powerful and active barons, by granting them possessions and immunities, which raised them to still greater power. When the King himself came to assume the reins of government, he found his revenues wasted or alienated, the crown lands seized or given away, and the nobles so accustomed to independence, that, after the struggles of a whole reign, he was seldom able to reduce them to the same state in which they had been at the beginning of his minority, or to wrest from them what they had usurped during that time. If we take a view of what happened to each of our Kings, who was so unfortunate as to be placed in this situation, the truth and importance of this observation will fully appear.

Review of the events favourable to the nobles during each minority.

David II.

The minority of David II. the son of Robert Bruce, was disturbed by the pretensions of Edward Baliol, who, relying on the aid of England, and on the support of some disaffected barons among the Scots, invaded the kingdom. The success which at first attended his arms, obliged the young King to retire to France; and Baliol took possession of the throne. A small body of the nobles, however, continuing faithful to their exiled Prince, drove Baliol out of Scotland; and after an absence of nine years, David returned from France, and took the government of the kingdom into his own hands. But nobles, who were thus wasting their blood and treasure in defence of the crown, had a right to the undisturbed possession of their ancient privileges and even some title to arrogate new ones. It seems to have been a maxim in that age, that every leader might claim as his own the territory which his sword had won from the enemy. Great acquisitions were gained by the nobility in that way; and to these the gratitude and liberality of David added, by distributing among such as adhered to him, the vast possessions which fell to the crown by the forfeiture of his enemies. The family of Douglas, which began to rise above the other nobles in the reign of his father, augmented both its power and its property during his minority.

1329.

James I.

1405.

James I. was seized by the English during the continuance of a truce, and ungenerously detained a prisoner almost nineteen years. During that period, the kingdom was governed, first by his uncle Robert Duke of Albany, and then by Murdo the son of Robert. Both these noblemen aspired to the

BOOK I. crown; and their unnatural ambition, if we may believe most of our historians, not only cut short the days of Prince David, the King's eldest brother, but prolonged the captivity of James. They flattered themselves that they might step with less opposition into a throne, when almost vacant; and dreading the King's return as the extinction of their authority and the end of their hopes, they carried on the negotiations for obtaining his liberty with extreme remissness. At the same time, they neglected nothing that could either sooth or bribe the nobles to approve of their scheme. They slackened the reins of government; they allowed the prerogative to be encroached upon; they suffered the most irregular acts of power, and even wanton instances of oppression, to pass with impunity; they dealt out the patrimony of the crown among those whose enmity they dreaded or whose favour they had gained; and reduced the royal authority to a state of imbecility, from which succeeding monarchs laboured in vain to raise it.

1437. James II. During the minority of James II. the administration of affairs as well as the custody of the King's person were committed to Sir William Crichton and Sir Alexander Livingston. Jealousy and discord were the effects of their conjunct authority, and each of them, in order to strengthen himself, bestowed new power and privileges upon the great men whose aid he courted; while the young Earl of Douglas, encouraged by their divisions, erected a sort of independent principality within the kingdom; and, forbidding his vassals to acknowledge any authority but his own, he created knights,

appointed a privy council, named officers civil and military, assumed every ensign of royalty but the title of King, and appeared in public with a magnificence more than royal. BOOK I.

Eight persons were chosen to govern the kingdom during the minority of James III. Lord Boyd, however, by seizing the person of the young King, and by the ascendant which he acquired over him, soon engrossed the whole authority. He formed the ambitious project of raising his family to the same pitch of power and grandeur with those of the prime nobility; and he effected it. While intent on this, he relaxed the vigour of government, and the barons became accustomed, once more, to anarchy and independence. The power, which Boyd had been at so much pains to acquire, was of no long continuance, and the fall of his family, according to the fate of favourites, was sudden and destructive; but upon its ruins the family of Hamilton rose, which soon attained the highest rank in the kingdom. 1460. James III.

As the minority of James V. was longer, it was likewise more turbulent, than those of the preceding Kings. And the contending nobles, encouraged or protected either by the King of France, or of England, formed themselves into more regular factions, and disregarded more than ever the restraints of order and authority. The French had the advantage of seeing one, devoted to their interest, raised to be Regent. This was the Duke of Albany, a native of France, and a grandson of James II. But Alexander Lord Home, the most eminent of all Scottish peers who survived the fatal battle of Flowden, thwarted all his measures during the first years James V.

BOOK I. of his administration; and the intrigues of the Queen Dowager, sister of Henry VIII. rendered the latter part of it no less feeble. Though supported by French auxiliaries, the nobles despised his authority, and, regardless either of his threats or his entreaties, peremptorily refused, two several times, to enter England, to the borders of which kingdom he had led them. Provoked by these repeated instances of contempt, the Regent abandoned his troublesome station, and, retiring to France, preferred the tranquillity of a private life, to an office destitute of real authority. Upon his retreat, Douglas Earl of Angus became master of the King's person, and governed the kingdom in his name. Many efforts were made to deprive him of his usurped authority. But the numerous vassals and friends of his family adhered to him, because he divided with them the power and emoluments of his office; the people reverenced and loved the name of Douglas; he exercised, without the title of Regent, a fuller and more absolute authority than any who had enjoyed that dignity; and the ancient but dangerous pre-eminence of the Douglases seemed to be restored.

To these, and to many other causes, omitted or unobserved by us, did the Scottish nobility owe that exorbitant and uncommon power, of which instances occur so frequently in our history. Nothing, however, demonstrates so fully the extent of their power, as the length of its duration. Many years after the declension of the feudal system in the other kingdoms of Europe, and when the arms or policy of Princes had, every where, shaken, or laid it in ruins, the foundations of that ancient fabric re-

mained, in a great measure, firm and untouched in Scotland.

The power of the feudal nobles become intolerable to princes.

The powers which the feudal institutions vested in the nobles, soon became intolerable to all the princes of Europe, who longed to possess something more than a nominal and precarious authority. Their impatience to obtain this, precipitated Henry III. of England, Edward II. and some other weak Princes, into rash and premature attempts against the privileges of the barons, in which they were disappointed or perished. Princes of greater abilities were content to mitigate evils which they could not cure; they sought occupation for the turbulent spirit of their nobles, in frequent wars; and allowed their fiery courage to evaporate in foreign expeditions, which, if they brought no other advantage, secured at least domestic tranquillity. But time and accidents ripened the feudal governments for destruction. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, and beginning of the sixteenth, all the Princes of Europe attacked, as if by concert, the power of their nobles. Men of genius then undertook, with success, what their unskilful predecessors had attempted in vain. Lewis XI. of France, the most profound and the most adventurous genius of that age, began, and in a single reign almost completed, the scheme of their destruction. The sure but concealed policy of Henry VII. of England, produced the same effect. The means, indeed, employed by these monarchs were very different. The blow which Lewis struck was sudden and fatal. The artifices of Henry resembled those slow poisons, which waste the constitution, but become not mortal till some

The attempts to humble the nobles successful in France and in England.

BOOK I.

distant period. Nor did they produce consequences less opposite. Lewis boldly added to the crown whatever he wrested from the nobles. Henry undermined his barons, by encouraging them to sell their lands, which enriched the commons, and gave them a weight in the legislature unknown to their predecessors. But while these great revolutions were carrying on in two kingdoms with which Scotland was intimately connected, little alteration happened there; our Kings could neither extend their own prerogative, nor enable the commons to encroach upon the aristocracy; the nobles not only retained most of their ancient privileges and possessions, but continued to make new acquisitions.

But the nobles continue to gather strength in Scotland.

This was not owing to the inattention of our Princes, or to their want of ambition. They were abundantly sensible of the exorbitant power of the nobility, and extremely solicitous to humble that order. They did not, however, possess means sufficient for accomplishing this end. The resources of our monarchs were few, and the progress which they made was of course inconsiderable. But as the number of their followers, and the extent of their jurisdiction, were the two chief circumstances which rendered the nobles formidable; in order to counterbalance the one, and to restrain the other, all our Kings had recourse to nearly the same expedients.

Our kings endeavoured to extend the royal authority:

General means towards this end:

I. Among nobles of a fierce courage, and of unpolished manners, surrounded with vassals bold and licentious, whom they were bound by interest and honour to protect, the causes of discord were many and unavoidable. As the contending parties could

Encourage discord among the nobles:

seldom agree in acknowledging the authority of any common superior or judge, and their impatient spirit would seldom wait the slow decisions of justice, their quarrels were usually terminated by the sword. The offended baron assembled his vassals, and wasted the lands or shed the blood of his enemies. To forgive an injury was mean; to forbear revenge, infamous or cowardly[m]. Hence quarrels were transmitted from father to son, and, under the name of *deadly feuds*, subsisted for many generations with unmitigated rancour. It was the interest of the crown to foment rather than to extinguish these quarrels; and by scattering or cherishing the seeds of discord among the nobles, that union, which would have rendered the aristocracy invincible, and which must at once have annihilated the prerogative, was effectually prevented. To the

[m] The spirit of revenge was encouraged, not only by the manners, but, what is more remarkable, by the laws of those ages. If any person thought the prosecution of an injury offered to his family too troublesome, or too dangerous, the Salique laws permitted him publicly to desist from demanding vengeance; but the same laws, in order to punish his cowardice, and want of affection to his family, deprived him of the right of succession. Henault's Abregé Chronol. p. 81. Among the Anglo-Saxons, we find a singular institution distinguished by the name of *sodalitium*; a voluntary association, the object whereof was the personal security of those who joined in it, and which the feebleness of government at that time rendered necessary. Among other regulations, which are contained in one of these still extant, the following deserves notice: "If any associate shall either eat or drink with a person who has killed any member of the *sodalitium*, unless in the presence of the King, the bishop, or the count, and unless he can prove that he did not know the person, let him pay a great fine." Hickes, Dissert. Epistolar. apud Thesaur. Ling. Septentr. vol. i. p. 21.

BOOK I. same cause, our Kings were indebted for the success with which they sometimes attacked the most powerful chieftains. They employed private revenge to aid the impotence of public laws, and arming against the person who had incurred their displeasure those rival families which wished his fall, they rewarded their service by sharing among them the spoils of the vanquished. But this expedient, though it served to humble individuals, did not weaken the body of the nobility. Those who were now the instruments of their Prince's vengeance became, in a short time, the objects of his fear. Having acquired power and wealth by serving the crown, they, in their turn, set up for independence: and though there might be a fluctuation of power and of property; though old families fell, and new ones rose upon their ruins; the rights of the aristocracy remained entire, and its vigour unbroken.

Extend the jurisdiction of the King's courts:

II. As the administration of justice is one of the most powerful ties between a King and his subjects, all our Monarchs were at the utmost pains to circumscribe the jurisdiction of the barons, and to extend that of the crown. The external forms of subordination, natural to the feudal system, favoured this attempt. An appeal lay from the judges and courts of the barons, to those of the King. The right, however, of judging in the first instance belonged to the nobles, and they easily found means to defeat the effects of appeals, as well as of many other feudal regulations. The royal jurisdiction was almost confined within the narrow limits of the King's demesnes, beyond which his judges claimed indeed much authority, but possessed next to none.

Our Kings were sensible of these limitations, and bore them with impatience. But it was impossible to overturn, in a moment, what was so deeply rooted; or to strip the nobles, at once, of privileges which they had held so long, and which were wrought almost into the frame of the feudal constitution. To accomplish this, however, was an object of uniform and anxious attention to all our Princes. James I. led the way here, as well as in other instances, towards a more regular and perfect police. He made choice, among the estates of parliament, of a certain number of persons, whom he distinguished by the names of *Lords of Session*, and appointed them to hold courts for determining civil causes three times in the year, and forty days at a time, in whatever place he pleased to name. Their jurisdiction extended to all matters which formerly came under the cognizance of the King's council, and, being a committee of parliament, their decisions were final. James II. obtained a law, annexing all regalities, which should be forfeited, to the crown, and declaring the right of jurisdiction to be unalienable for the future. James III. imposed severe penalties upon those judges appointed by the barons, whose decisions should be found on a review to be unjust; and, by many other regulations, endeavoured to extend the authority of his own court[n]. James IV. on pretence of remedying the inconveniences arising from the short terms of the Court of Session, appointed other judges called *Lords of Daily*

[n] Act 26. P. 1469. Act 94. P. 1493. Act 99. P. 1487.

BOOK I. *Council*. The *Session* was an ambulatory court, and met seldom; the *Daily Council* was fixed, and sat constantly at Edinburgh; and, though not composed of members of parliament, the same powers which the Lords of Session enjoyed were vested in it. At last James V. erected a new court that still subsists, and which he named the *College of Justice*, the judges or *Senators* of which were called *Lords of Council and Session*. This court not only exercised the same jurisdiction which formerly belonged to the Session and Daily Council, but new rights were added. Privileges of great importance were granted to its members, its forms were prescribed, its terms fixed, and regularity, power, and splendour conferred upon it[o]. The persons constituted judges in all these different courts had, in many respects, the advantage of those who presided in the courts of the barons; they were more eminent for their skill in law, their rules of proceeding were more uniform, and their decisions more consistent. Such judicatories became the objects of confidence and of veneration. Men willingly submitted their property to their determination, and their encroachments on the jurisdictions of the nobles were popular, and for that reason successful. By devices of a similar nature, the jurisdiction of the nobles in criminal causes was restrained, and the authority of the Court of *Justiciary* extended. The crown, in this particular, gaining insensibly upon the nobles, recovered more ample authority; and the King, whose jurisdiction once resembled

[o] Keith, App. 74, &c.

that of a baron, rather than that of a sovereign,[p] came more and more to be considered as the head of the community and the supreme dispenser of justice to his people. These acquisitions of our Kings, however, though comparatively great, were in reality inconsiderable; and, notwithstanding all their efforts, many of the separate jurisdictions possessed by the nobles remained in great vigour; and their final abolition was reserved to a distant and more happy period.

Each of our Kings pursued some plan of humbling the nobles.

But besides these methods of defending their prerogative and humbling the aristocracy, which may be considered as common to all our Princes, we shall find, by taking a view of their reigns, that almost every one of our Kings, from Robert Bruce to James V., had formed some particular system for

[p] The most perfect idea of the feudal system of government may be attained by attending to the state of Germany, and to the History of France. In the former, the feudal institutions still subsist with great vigour; and though altogether abolished in the latter, the public records have been so carefully preserved, that the French lawyers and antiquaries have been enabled, with more certainty and precision than those of any other country in Europe, to trace its rise, its progress, and revolutions. In Germany, every principality may be considered as a fief, and all its great princes as vassals, holding of the Emperor. They possess all the feudal privileges; their fiefs are perpetual; their jurisdictions within their own territories separate and extensive, and the great offices of the empire are all hereditary, and annexed to particular families. At the same time the Emperor retains many of the prerogatives of the feudal monarchs. Like them, his claims and pretensions are innumerable, and his power small; his jurisdiction within his own demesnes or hereditary countries is complete; beyond the bounds of these it is almost nothing; and so permanent are feudal principles, that although the feudal system be overturned in almost every parti-

BOOK I. depressing the authority of the nobles, which was the object both of their jealousy and terror. This conduct of our monarchs, if we rest satisfied with the accounts of their historians, must be considered as flowing entirely from their resentment against particular noblemen; and all their attempts to humble them must be viewed as the sallies of private passion, not as the consequences of any general plan of policy. But, though some of their actions may be imputed to those passions, though the different genius of the men, the temper of the times, and the state of the nation, necessarily occasioned great variety in their schemes; yet, without being chargeable with excessive refinement, we may affirm that their end was uniformly the same; and that the project of redu-

This proved by a review of the events

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cular state in Germany, and although the greater part of its princes have become absolute, the original feudal constitution of the Empire still remains, and ideas peculiar to that form of government direct all its operations, and determine the rights of all its princes. Our observations with regard to the limited jurisdiction of kings under the feudal governments, are greatly illustrated by what happened in France. The feebleness and dotage of the descendants of Charlemagne encouraged the peers to usurp an independent jurisdiction. Nothing remained in the hands of the crown; all was seized by them. When Hugh Capet ascended the throne, A. D. 987, he kept possession of his private patrimony the Comté of Paris; and all the jurisdiction which the Kings his successors exercised for some time, was within its territories. There were only four towns in France where he could establish *Grands Baillis*, or royal judges: all the other lands, towns, and bailliages, belonged to the nobles. The methods to which the French monarchs had recourse for extending their jurisdiction were exactly similar to those employed by our princes. Henault's Abregé, p. 617, &c. De l'Esprit des Loix, liv. xxx. ch. 20, &c.

cing the power of the aristocracy, sometimes avowed, and pursued with vigour; sometimes concealed, or seemingly suspended; was never altogether abandoned.

in their reigns.

No Prince was ever more indebted to his nobles than Robert Bruce. Their valour conquered the kingdom, and placed him on the throne. His gratitude and generosity bestowed on them the lands of the vanquished. Property has seldom undergone greater or more sudden revolutions, than those to which it was subject at that time in Scotland. Edward I. having forfeited the estates of most of the ancient Scottish barons, granted them to his English subjects. These were expelled by the Scots, and their lands seized by new masters. Amidst such rapid changes, confusion was unavoidable; and many possessed their lands by titles extremely defective. During one of those truces between the two nations, occasioned rather by their being weary of war than desirous of peace, Robert formed a scheme for checking the growing power and wealth of the nobles. He summoned them to appear and to shew by what rights they held their lands. They assembled accordingly; and the question being put, they started up at once, and drew their swords, "By these," said they, "we acquired our lands, and with these we will defend them." The King, intimidated by their boldness, prudently dropped the project. But so deeply did they resent this attack upon their order, that, notwithstanding Robert's popular and splendid virtues, it occasioned a dangerous conspiracy against his life.

Robert Bruce.

David his son, at first an exile in France, after-

David II.

BOOK I. ward a prisoner in England, and involved in continual war with Edward III., had not leisure to attend to the internal police of his kingdom, or to think of retrenching the privileges of the nobility.

Robert II. Our historians have been more careful to relate the military than the civil transactions of the reign of Robert II. Skirmishes and inroads of little consequence they describe minutely: but with regard to every thing that happened during several years of tranquillity, they are altogether silent.

Robert III. The feeble administration of Robert III. must likewise be passed over slightly. A Prince of a mean genius, and of a frail and sickly constitution, was not a fit person to enter the lists with active and martial barons, or to attempt wresting from them any of their rights.

James I. The civil transactions in Scotland are better known since the beginning of the reign of James I., and a complete series of our laws supplies the defects of our historians. The English made some amends for their injustice in detaining that Prince a prisoner, by their generous care of his education. During his long residence in England, he had an opportunity of observing the feudal system in a more advanced state, and refined from many of the imperfections which still adhered to it in his own kingdom. He saw there, nobles great, but not independent; a king powerful, though far from absolute: he saw a regular administration of government; wise laws enacted; and a nation flourishing and happy, because all ranks of men were accustomed to obey them. Full of these ideas, he returned into his native country, which presented to

him a very different scene. The royal authority, never great, was now contemptible, by having been so long delegated to Regents. The ancient patrimony and revenues of the crown were almost totally alienated. During his long absence the name of King was little known, and less regarded. The licence of many years had rendered the nobles independent. Universal anarchy prevailed. The weak were exposed to the rapine and oppression of the strong. In every corner some barbarous chieftain ruled at pleasure, and neither feared the King, nor pitied the people[q].

James was too wise a Prince to employ open force to correct such inveterate evils. Neither the men nor the times would have borne it. He applied the gentler and less offensive remedy of laws and statutes. In a parliament held immediately after his return, he gained the confidence of his people, by many wise laws, tending visibly to re-establish order, tranquillity and justice, in the kingdom. But, at the same time that he endeavoured to secure these blessings to his subjects, he discovered his intention to recover those possessions of which the crown had been unjustly bereaved; and for that purpose obtained an act, by which he was empowered to summon such as had obtained crown lands during the

[q] A cotemporary monkish writer describes these calamities very feelingly in his rude Latin: "In diebus illis, non erat lex in Scotia, sed quilibet potentiorum juniorem oppressit; et totum regnum fuit unum latrocinium; homicidia, deprædationes, incendia, et cætera maleficia remanserunt impunita; et justitia relegata extra terminos regni exulavit." Chartular. Morav. apud Innes Essay, vol. i. p. 272.

BOOK I. three last reigns, to produce the rights by which they held them[r]. As this statute threatened the property of the nobles, another which passed in a subsequent parliament aimed a dreadful blow at their power. By it the leagues and combinations which we have already described, and which rendered the nobles so formidable to the crown, were declared unlawful[s]. Encouraged by this success in the beginning of his enterprise, James's next step was still bolder and more decisive. During the sitting of parliament, he seized, at once, his cousin Murdo Duke of Albany, and his sons; the Earls of Douglas, Lennox, Angus, March, and above twenty other peers and barons of prime rank. To all of them, however, he was immediately reconciled, except to Albany and his sons, and Lennox. These were tried by their peers, and condemned; for what crime is now unknown. Their execution struck the whole order with terror, and their forfeiture added considerable possessions to the crown. He seized, likewise, the earldoms of Buchan and Strathern, upon different pretexts; and that of Mar fell to him by inheritance. The patience and inactivity of the nobles, while the King was proceeding so rapidly towards aggrandizing the crown, are amazing. The only obstruction he met with was from a slight insurrection headed by the Duke of Albany's youngest son, and that was easily suppressed. The splendour and presence of a King, to which the great men had been long unaccustomed, inspired reverence: James was a Prince of great

[r] Act 9. P. 1424. [s] Act 30. P. 1424.

abilities, and conducted his operations with much prudence. He was in friendship with England, and closely allied with the French King: he was adored by the people, who enjoyed unusual security and happiness under his administration: and all his acquisitions, however fatal to the body of the nobles, had been gained by attacks upon individuals; were obtained by decisions of law, and, being founded on circumstances peculiar to the persons who suffered, might excite murmurs and apprehensions, but afforded no colourable pretext for a general rebellion. It was not so with the next attempt which the King made. Encouraged by the facility with which he had hitherto advanced, he ventured upon a measure that irritated the whole body of the nobility, and which the events shew either to have been entered into with too much precipitancy, or to have been carried on with too much violence. The father of George Dunbar Earl of March had taken arms against Robert III., the King's father; but that crime had been pardoned, and his lands restored by Robert Duke of Albany. James, on pretext that the Regent had exceeded his power, and that it was the prerogative of the King alone to pardon treason, or to alienate lands annexed to the crown, obtained a sentence, declaring the pardon to be void, and depriving Dunbar of the earldom. Many of the great men held lands by no other right than what they derived from grants of the two Dukes of Albany. Such a decision, though they had reason to expect it in consequence of the statute which the King had obtained, occasioned a general alarm. Though Dunbar was at present the only sufferer,

BOOK I. the precedent might be extended, and their titles to possessions which they considered as the rewards of their valour, might be subjected to the review of courts of law, whose forms of proceeding, and jurisdiction, were in a martial age little known, and extremely odious. Terror and discontent spread fast upon this discovery of the King's intentions; the common danger called on the whole order to unite, and to make one bold stand before they were stripped successively of their acquisitions, and reduced to a state of poverty and insignificance. The prevalence of these sentiments among the nobles encouraged a few desperate men, the friends or followers of those who had been the chief sufferers under the King's administration, to form a conspiracy against his life. The first uncertain intelligence of this was brought him, while he lay in his camp before Roxburgh Castle. He durst not confide in nobles, to whom he had given so many causes of disgust, but instantly dismissed them and their vassals, and retiring to a monastery near Perth, was soon after murdered there in the most cruel manner. All our historians mention with astonishment this circumstance, of the King's disbanding his army at a time when it was so necessary for his preservation. A King, say they, surrounded with his barons, is secure from secret treason, and may defy open rebellion. But those very barons were the persons whom he chiefly dreaded; and it is evident from this review of his administration, that he had greater reason to apprehend danger, than to expect defence, from their hands. It was the misfortune of James, that his maxims and manners were too

refined for the age in which he lived. Happy! had he reigned in a kingdom more civilized; his love of peace, of justice, and of elegance, would have rendered his schemes successful; and, instead of perishing because he had attempted too much, a grateful people would have applauded and seconded his efforts to reform and improve them.

James II.

Crichton, the most able man of those who had the direction of affairs during the minority of James II., had been the minister of James I. and well acquainted with his resolution of humbling the nobility. He did not relinquish the design, and he endeavoured to inspire his pupil with the same sentiments. But what James had attempted to effect slowly and by legal means, his son and Crichton pursued with the impetuosity natural to Scotsmen, and with the fierceness peculiar to that age. William the sixth Earl of Douglas was the first victim to their barbarous policy. That young nobleman (as we have already observed), contemning the authority of an infant Prince, almost openly renounced his allegiance, and aspired to independence. Crichton, too high-spirited to bear such an insult, but too weak to curb or bring to justice so powerful an offender, decoyed him by many promises to an interview in the castle of Edinburgh, and, notwithstanding these, murdered both him and his brother. Crichton, however, gained little by this act of treachery, which rendered him universally odious. William the eighth Earl of Douglas was no less powerful, and no less formidable to the crown. By forming the league which we already mentioned with the Earl of Crawford and other barons, he had

BOOK I. united against his sovereign almost one half of his kingdom. But his credulity led him into the same snare which had been fatal to the former Earl. Relying on the King's promises, who had now attained to the years of manhood, and having obtained a safe-conduct under the great seal, he ventured to meet him in Stirling-castle. James urged him to dissolve that dangerous confederacy into which he had entered; the Earl obstinately refused; "If you will "not," said the enraged Monarch, drawing his dagger, "this shall;" and stabbed him to the heart. An action so unworthy of a King filled the nation with astonishment and with horror. The Earl's vassals ran to arms with the utmost fury, and dragging the safe-conduct, which the King had granted and violated, at a horse's tail, they marched towards Stirling, burnt the town, and threatened to besiege the castle. An accommodation, however, ensued; on what terms is not known. But the King's jealousy, and the new Earl's power and resentment, prevented it from being of long continuance. Both took the field at the head of their armies, and met near Abercorn. That of the Earl, composed chiefly of borderers, was far superior to the King's both in number and in valour; and a single battle must, in all probability, have decided whether the house of Stuart or of Douglas was henceforth to possess the throne of Scotland. But, while his troops impatiently expected the signal to engage, the Earl ordered them to retire to their camp; and Sir James Hamilton of Cadyow, the person in whom he placed the greatest confidence, convinced of his want of genius to improve an opportunity, or of his want of courage

to seize a crown, deserted him that very night. This example was followed by many; and the Earl, despised or forsaken by all, was soon driven out of the kingdom, and obliged to depend for his subsistence on the friendship of the King of England. The ruin of this great family, which had so long rivalled and overawed the crown, and the terror with which such an example of unsuccessful ambition filled the nobles, secured the King, for some time, from opposition; and the royal authority remained uncontrouled and almost absolute. James did not suffer this favourable interval to pass unimproved; he procured the consent of parliament to laws more advantageous to the prerogative, and more subversive of the privileges of the aristocracy, than were ever obtained by any former or subsequent monarch of Scotland.

By one of these, not only all the vast possessions of the Earl of Douglas were annexed to the crown, but all prior and future alienations of crown-lands were declared to be void; and the King was impowered to seize them at pleasure, without any process or form of law, and oblige the possessors to refund whatever they had received from them[t]. A dreadful instrument of oppression in the hands of a Prince!

Another law prohibited the wardenship of the marches to be granted hereditarily; restrained, in several instances, the jurisdiction of that office; and extended the authority of the King's courts[u].

By a third, it was enacted that no *Regality*, or

[t] ct 41. P. 1455. [u] Ibid. Act 42.

BOOK I.

exclusive right of administering justice within a man's own lands, should be granted in time to come, without the consent of parliament[x]; a condition which implied almost an express prohibition. Those nobles who already possessed that great privilege, would naturally be solicitous to prevent it from becoming common, by being bestowed on many. Those who had not themselves attained it, would envy others the acquisition of such a flattering distinction, and both would concur in rejecting the claims of new pretenders.

By a fourth act, all new grants of hereditary offices were prohibited, and those obtained since the death of the last King were revoked[y].

Each of these statutes undermined some of the great pillars on which the power of the aristocracy rested. During the remainder of his reign, this Prince pursued the plan which he had begun, with the utmost vigour; and had not a sudden death, occasioned by the splinter of a cannon which burst near him at the siege of Roxburgh, prevented his progress, he wanted neither genius nor courage to perfect it: and Scotland might, in all probability, have been the first kingdom in Europe which would have seen the subversion of the feudal system.

James III.

James III. discovered no less eagerness than his father or grandfather to humble the nobility; but, far inferior to either of them in abilities and address, he adopted a plan extremely impolitic, and his reign was disastrous, as well as his end tragical. Under the feudal governments, the nobles were not only

[x] Act 43. P. 1455. [y] Act 44.

the King's ministers, and possessed of all the great offices of power or of trust; they were likewise his companions and favourites, and hardly any but them approached his person or were entitled to his regard. But James, who both feared and hated his nobles, kept them at an unusual distance, and bestowed every mark of confidence and affection upon a few mean persons, of professions so dishonourable as ought to have rendered them unworthy of his presence. Shut up with these in his castle of Stirling, he seldom appeared in public, and amused himself in architecture, music, and other arts, which were then little esteemed. The nobles beheld the power and favour of these minions with indignation. Even the sanguinary measures of his father provoked them less than his neglect. Individuals alone suffered by the former; by the latter, every man thought himself injured because all were contemned. Their discontent was much heightened by the King's recalling all rights to crown-lands, hereditary offices, regalities, and every other concession which was detrimental to his prerogative, and which had been extorted during his minority. Combinations among themselves, secret intrigues with England, and all the usual preparatives for civil war, were the effects of their resentment. Alexander Duke of Albany, and John Earl of Mar, the King's brothers, two young men of turbulent and ambitious spirits, and incensed against James, who treated them with the same coldness as he did the other great men, entered deeply into all their cabals. The King detected their designs before they were ripe for execution, and seizing his two brothers com-

BOOK I. mitted the Duke of Albany to Edinburgh-castle. The Earl of Mar, having remonstrated with too much boldness against the King's conduct, was murdered, if we may believe our historians, by his command. Albany, apprehensive of the same fate, made his escape out of the castle, and fled into France. Concern for the King's honour, or indignation at his measures, were perhaps the motives which first induced him to join the malecontents. But James's attachment to favourites rendering him every day more odious to the nobles, the prospect of the advantages which might be derived from their general disaffection, added to the resentment which he felt on account of his brother's death, and his own injuries, soon inspired Albany with more ambitious and criminal thoughts. He concluded a treaty with Edward IV. of England, in which he assumed the name of Alexander King of Scots; and, in return for the assistance which was promised him towards dethroning his brother, he bound himself, as soon as he was put in possession of the kingdom, to swear fealty and do homage to the English monarch, to renounce the ancient alliance with France, to contract a new one with England, and to surrender some of the strongest castles and most valuable counties in Scotland[x]. That aid, which the Duke so basely purchased at the price of his own honour, and the independence of his country, was punctually granted him, and the Duke of Gloucester with a powerful army conducted him towards Scotland. The danger of a foreign invasion obliged James to

[x] Abercr. Mart. Atch. vol. ii. p. 443.

implore the assistance of those nobles whom he had so long treated with contempt. Some of them were in close confederacy with the Duke of Albany, and approved of all his pretensions. Others were impatient for any event which would restore their order to its ancient pre-eminence. They seemed, however, to enter with zeal into the measures of their sovereign for the defence of the kingdom against its invaders[a], and took the field at the head of a powerful army of their followers, but with a stronger disposition to redress their own grievances than to annoy the enemy; and with a fixed resolution of punishing those minions whose insolence they could no longer tolerate. This resolution they executed in the camp near Lauder, with a military dispatch and rigour. Having previously concerted their plan, the Earls of Angus, Huntly, Lennox, followed by almost all the barons of chief note in the army, forcibly entered the apartment of their sovereign, seized all his favourites except one Ramsay, whom they could not tear from the King, in whose arms he took shelter, and, without any form of trial, hanged them instantly over a bridge. Among the most remarkable of those who had engrossed the King's affection, were Cochran a mason, Hommil a taylor, Leonard a smith, Rogers a musician, and Torsifan a fencing-master. So despicable a retinue discovers the capriciousness of James's character, and accounts for the indignation of the nobles when they beheld the favour due to them bestowed on such unworthy objects.

[a] Black Acts, fol. 65.

BOOK I. James had no reason to confide in an army so little under his command, and, dismissing it, shut himself up in the castle of Edinburgh. After various intrigues, Albany's lands and honours were at length restored to him, and he seemed even to have regained his brother's favour by some important services. But their friendship was not of long duration. James abandoned himself, once more, to the guidance of favourites; and the fate of those who had suffered at Lauder did not deter others from courting that dangerous pre-eminence. Albany, on pretext that an attempt had been made to take away his life by poison, fled from court, and, retiring to his castle at Dunbar, drew thither a greater number of barons than attended on the King himself. At the same time he renewed his former confederacy with Edward; the Earl of Angus openly negotiated that infamous treaty; other barons were ready to concur with it; and if the sudden death of Edward had not prevented Albany's receiving any aid from England, the crown of Scotland would probably have been the reward of this unworthy combination with the enemies of his country. But, instead of any hopes of reigning in Scotland, he found, upon the death of Edward, that he could not reside there in safety; and flying first to England and then to France, he seems from that time to have taken no part in the affairs of his native country. Emboldened by his retreat, the King and his ministers multiplied the insults which they offered to the nobility. A standing guard, a thing unknown under the feudal governments, and inconsistent with the familiarity and confidence with

which monarchs then lived amidst their nobles, was raised for the King's defence, and the command of it given to Ramsay, lately created earl of Bothwell, the same person who had so narrowly escaped when his companions were put to death at Lauder. As if this precaution had not been sufficient, a proclamation was issued, forbidding any person to appear in arms within the precincts of the court[b]; which, at a time when no man of rank left his own house without a numerous retinue of armed followers, was, in effect, debarring the nobles from all access to the King. James, at the same time, became fonder of retirement than ever, and, sunk in indolence or superstition, or attentive only to amusements, devolved his whole authority upon his favourites. So many injuries provoked the most considerable nobles to take arms; and having persuaded or obliged the Duke of Rothesay, the King's eldest son, a youth of fifteen, to set himself at their head, they openly declared their intention of depriving James of a crown, of which he had discovered himself to be so unworthy. Roused by this danger, the King quitted his retirement, took the field, and encountered them near Bannockburn; but the valour of the borderers, of whom the army of the malecontents was chiefly composed, soon put his troops to flight, and he himself was slain in the pursuit. Suspicion, indolence, immoderate attachment to favourites, and all the vices of a feeble mind, are visible in his whole conduct; but the character of a cruel and unrelenting tyrant seems to be unjustly

[b] Ferrerius, 398.

BOOK I. affixed to him by our historians. His neglect of the nobles irritated, but did not weaken them; and their discontent, the immoderate ambition of his two brothers, and their unnatural confederacies with England, were sufficient to have disturbed a more vigorous administration, and to have rendered a Prince of superior talents unhappy.

The indignation which many persons of rank expressed against the conduct of the conspirators, together with the terror of the sentence of excommunication which the Pope pronounced against them, obliged them to use their victory with great moderation and humanity. Being conscious how detestable the crime of imbruing their hands in the blood of their Sovereign appeared, they endeavoured to regain the good opinion of their countrymen, and to atone for the treatment of the father, by their loyalty and duty towards the son. They placed him instantly on the throne, and the whole kingdom soon united in acknowledging his authority.

James IV. James IV. was naturally generous and brave; he felt in an high degree, all the passions which animate a young and noble mind. He loved magnificence, he delighted in war, and was eager to obtain fame. During his reign, the ancient and hereditary enmity between the King and nobles seems almost entirely to have ceased. He envied not their splendor, because it contributed to the ornament of his court; nor did he dread their power, which he considered as the security of his kingdom, not as an object of terror to himself. This confidence on his part met with the proper return of duty and affection on theirs; and, in his war with England, he

experienced how much a King beloved by his nobles is able to perform. Though the ardor of his courage, and the spirit of chivalry, rather than the prospect of any national advantage, induced him to declare war against England, such was the zeal of his subjects for the King's glory, that he was followed by as gallant an army as ever any of his ancestors had led upon English ground. But though James himself formed no scheme dangerous or detrimental to the aristocracy, his reign was distinguished by an event extremely fatal to it; and one accidental blow humbled it more than all the premeditated attacks of preceding Kings. In the rash and unfortunate battle of Flowden, a brave nobility chose rather to die than to desert their sovereign. Twelve earls, thirteen lords, five eldest sons of noblemen, and an incredible number of barons, fell with the King[c]. The whole body of the nobles long and sensibly felt this disaster; and if a Prince of full age had then ascended the throne, their consternation and feebleness would have afforded him advantages which no former monarch ever possessed.

James V.

But James V. who succeeded his father, was an infant of a year old; and though the office of Regent was conferred upon his cousin the Duke of Albany, a man of genius and enterprise, a native of France, and accustomed to a government where the power of the King was already great; though he made many bold attempts to extend the royal authority; though he put to death Lord Home, and banished the Earl of Angus, the two noblemen of

[c] Aber. ii. 540.

BOOK I. greatest influence in the kingdom, the aristocracy lost no ground under his administration. A stranger to the manners, the laws, and the language of the people whom he was called to rule, he acted, on some occasions, rather like a Viceroy of the French King, than the Governor of Scotland; but the nobles asserted their own privileges, and contended for the interest of their country with a boldness which convinced him of their independence, and of the impotence of his own authority. After several unsuccessful struggles, he voluntarily retired to France; and the King being then in his thirteenth year, the nobles agreed that he should assume the government, and that eight persons should be appointed to attend him by turns, and to advise and assist him in the administration of public affairs. The Earl of Angus, who was one of that number, did not long remain satisfied with such divided power. He gained some of his colleagues, removed others, and intimidated the rest. When the term of his attendance expired, he still retained authority, to which all were obliged to submit, because none of them was in a condition to dispute it. The affection of the young King was the only thing wanting, to fix and perpetuate his power. But an active and high-spirited Prince submitted with great impatience to the restraint in which he was kept. It ill suited his years or disposition to be confined as a prisoner within his own palace; to be treated with no respect, and to be deprived of all power. He could not, on some occasions, conceal his resentment and indignation. Angus foresaw that he had much to dread from these; and as he could not gain the King's heart,

he resolved to make sure of his person. James was continually surrounded by the Earl's spies and confidents; many eyes watched all his motions, and observed every step he took. But the King's eagerness to obtain liberty, eluded all their vigilance. He escaped from Falkland, and fled to the castle of Stirling, the residence of the Queen his mother, and the only place of strength in the kingdom which was not in the hands of the Douglases. The nobles, of whom some were influenced by their hatred to Angus, and others by their respect for the King, crowded to Stirling, and his court was soon filled with persons of the greatest distinction. The Earl, though astonished at this unexpected revolution, resolved at first to make one bold push for recovering his authority, by marching to Stirling at the head of his followers; but he wanted either courage or strength to execute this resolution. In a parliament held soon after, he and his adherents were attainted, and, after escaping from many dangers, and enduring much misery, he was at length obliged to fly into England for refuge.

James had now not only the name, but, though extremely young, the full authority of a King. He was inferior to no Prince of that age in gracefulness of person, or in vigour of mind. His understanding was good, and his heart warm; the former capable of great improvement, and the latter susceptible of the best impressions. But, according to the usual fate of Princes who are called to the throne in their infancy, his education had been neglected. His private preceptors were more ready to flatter than to instruct him. It was the interest of those who

BOOK I. governed the kingdom, to prevent him from knowing too much. The Earl of Angus, in order to divert him from business, gave him an early taste for such pleasures as afterwards occupied and engrossed him more than became a King. Accordingly, we discover in James all the features of a great but uncultivated spirit. On the one hand, violent passions, implacable resentment, an immoderate desire of power, and the utmost rage at disappointment. On the other, love to his people, zeal for the punishment of private oppressors, confidence in his favourites, and the most engaging openness and affability of behaviour.

What he himself had suffered from the exorbitant power of the nobles, led him early to imitate his predecessors in their attempts to humble them. The plan he formed for that purpose was more profound, more systematic, and pursued with greater constancy and steadiness, than that of any of his ancestors: and the influence of the events in his reign upon those of the subsequent period renders it necessary to explain his conduct at greater length, and to enter into a more minute detail of his actions. He had penetration enough to discover those defects in the schemes adopted by former Kings, which occasioned their miscarriage. The examples of James I. had taught him that wise laws operate slowly on a rude people, and that the fierce spirit of the feudal nobles was not to be subdued by these alone. The effects of the violent measures of James II. convinced him, that the oppression of one great family is apt either to excite the suspicion and resentment of the other nobles, or to enrich with its

spoils some new family, which would soon adopt the same sentiments, and become equally formidable to the crown. He saw, from the fatal end of James III., that neglect was still more intolerable to the nobles than oppression, and that the ministry of new men and favourites was both dishonourable and dangerous to a Prince. At the same time, he felt that the authority of the crown was not sufficient to counterbalance the power of the aristocracy, and that without some new accession of strength, he could expect no better success in the struggle than his ancestors. In this extremity, he applied himself to the clergy, hoping that they would both relish his plan, and concur, with all their influence, in enabling him to put it in execution. Under the feudal government, the church, being reckoned a third estate, had its representatives in parliament; the number of these was considerable, and they possessed great influence in that assembly. The superstition of former Kings, and the zeal of many ages of ignorance, had bestowed on ecclesiastics a great proportion of the national wealth; and the authority which they acquired by the reverence of the people, was superior even to that which they derived from their riches. This powerful body, however, depended entirely on the crown. The Popes, notwithstanding their attention to extend their usurpations, had neglected Scotland as a distant and poor kingdom, and permitted its Kings to exercise powers which they disputed with more considerable Princes. The Scottish monarchs had the sole right of nomination to vacant bishoprics and abbeys[d];

[b] Epist. Reg. Scot. i. 197, &c. Act 125. P. 1540.

BOOK I. and James naturally concluded, that men who expected preferment from his favour, would be willing to merit it, by promoting his designs. Happily for him, the nobles had not yet recovered the blow which fell on their order at Flowden; and if we may judge either from their conduct, or from the character given of them by Sir Ralph Sadler, the English envoy in Scotland, they were men of little genius, of no experience in business, and incapable of acting either with unanimity or with vigour. Many of the clergy, on the other hand, were distinguished by their great abilities, and no less by their ambition. Various causes of disgust subsisted between them and the martial nobles, who were apt to view the pacific character of ecclesiastics with some degree of contempt, and who envied their power and wealth. By acting in concert with the King, they not only would gratify him, but avenge themselves, and hoped to aggrandize their own order by depressing those who were their sole rivals. Secure of so powerful a concurrence, James ventured to proceed with greater boldness. In the first heat of resentment he had driven the Earl of Angus out of the kingdom; and, sensible that a person so far superior to the other nobles in abilities, might create many obstacles which would retard or render ineffectual all his schemes, he solemnly swore that he would never permit him to return into Scotland; and, notwithstanding the repeated solicitations of the King of England, he adhered to his vow with unrelenting obstinacy. He then proceeded to repair the fortifications of Edinburgh, Stirling, and other castles, and to fill his magazines with arms and am-

munition. Having taken these precautions by way of defence, he began to treat the nobility with the utmost coldness and reserve. Those offices, which they were apt, from long possession, to consider as appropriated to their order, were now bestowed on ecclesiastics, who alone possessed the king's ear, and, together with a few gentlemen of inferior rank, to whom he had communicated his schemes, were intrusted with the management of all public affairs. These ministers were chosen with judgment; and Cardinal Beatoun, who soon became the most eminent among them, was a man of superior genius. These served the King with fidelity; they carried on his measures with vigour, with reputation, and with success. James no longer concealed his distrust of the nobles, and suffered no opportunity of mortifying them to escape. Slight offences were aggravated into real crimes, and punished with severity. Every accusation against persons of rank was heard with pleasure, every appearance of guilt was examined with rigour, and every trial proved fatal to those who were accused: the banishing Hepburn Earl of Bothwell for reasons extremely frivolous, beheading the eldest son of Lord Forbes without sufficient evidence of his guilt, and the condemning Lady Glamis, a sister of the Earl of Angus, to be burnt for the crime of witchcraft, of which even that credulous age believed her innocent, are monuments both of the King's hatred of the nobility, of the severity of his government, and of the stretches he made towards absolute power. By these acts of authority, he tried the spirit of the nobles, and how much they were willing to bear,

BOOK I. Their patience increased his contempt for them, and added to the ardour and boldness with which he pursued his plan. Meanwhile they observed the tendency of his schemes with concern, and with resentment; but the King's sagacity, the vigilance of his ministers, and the want of a proper leader, made it dangerous to concert any measures for their defence, and impossible to act with becoming vigour. James and his counsellors, by a false step which they took, presented to them, at length, an advantage which they did not fail to improve.

Motives, which are well known, had prompted Henry VIII. to disclaim the Pope's authority, and to seize the revenues of the regular clergy. His system of reformation satisfied none of his subjects. Some were enraged because he had proceeded so far, others murmured because he proceeded no farther. By his imperious temper, and alternate persecutions of the zealots for Popery, and the converts to the Protestant opinions, he was equally formidable to both. Henry was afraid that this general dissatisfaction of his people might encourage his enemies on the continent to invade his kingdom. He knew that both the Pope and the Emperor courted the friendship of the King of Scots, and endeavoured to engage him in an alliance against England. He resolved, therefore, to disappoint the effects of their negotiations, by entering into a closer union with his nephew. In order to accomplish this, he transmitted to James an elaborate memorial, presenting the numerous encroachments of the See of Rome upon the rights of sovereigns[e]; and that he

[e] Strype, Eccles. Mem. 1. App. 155.

might induce him more certainly to adopt the same measures for abolishing Papal usurpation, which had proved so efficacious in England, he sent ambassadors into Scotland, to propose a personal interview with him at York. It was plainly James's interest to accept this invitation; the assistance of so powerful an ally, the high honours which were promised him, and the liberal subsidies he might have obtained, would have added no little dignity to his domestic government, and must have greatly facilitated the execution of his favourite plan. On the other hand, a war with England, which he had reason to apprehend if he rejected Henry's offers of friendship, was inconsistent with all his views. This would bring him to depend on his barons; an army could not be raised without their assistance: to call nobles incensed against their Prince into the field, was to unite his enemies, to make them sensible of their own strength, and to afford them an opportunity of revenging their wrongs. James, who was not ignorant that all these consequences might follow a breach with England, listened at first to Henry's proposal, and consented to the interview at York. But the clergy dreaded an union, which must have been established on the ruins of the church. Henry had taken great pains to infuse into his nephew his own sentiments concerning religion, and had frequently solicited him, by ambassadors, to renounce the usurped dominion of the Pope, which was no less dishonourable to Princes than grievous to their subjects. The clergy had hitherto, with great address, diverted the King from regarding these solicitations. But in an amicable

BOOK I. conference, Henry expected, and they feared, that James would yield to his entreaties, or be convinced by his arguments. They knew that the revenues of the church were an alluring object to a Prince who wanted money, and who loved it; that the pride and ambition of ecclesiastics raised the indignation of the nobles; that their indecent lives gave offence to the people; that the Protestant opinions were spreading fast throughout the nation; and that an universal defection from the established church would be the consequence of giving the smallest degree of encouragement to these principles. For these reasons, they employed all their credit with the King, and had recourse to every artifice and insinuation, in order to divert him from a journey which must have been so fatal to their interest. They endeavoured to inspire him with fear, by magnifying the danger to which he would expose his person by venturing so far into England, without any security but the word of a Prince, who, having violated every thing venerable and sacred in religion, was no longer to be trusted; and by way of compensation for the sums which he might have received from Henry, they offered an annual donative of fifty thousand crowns; they promised to contribute liberally towards carrying on a war with England, and flattered him with the prospect of immense riches, arising from the forfeiture of persons who were to be tried and condemned as heretics. Influenced by these considerations, James broke his agreement with Henry, who, in expectation of meeting him, had already come to York; and that haughty and impatient monarch resented the affront, by declaring war

against Scotland. His army was soon ready to invade the kingdom. James was obliged to have recourse to the nobles, for the defence of his dominions. At his command, they assembled their followers, but with the same dispositions which had animated their ancestors in the reign of James III., and with a full resolution of imitating their example, by punishing those to whom they imputed the grievances of which they had reason to complain; and if the King's ministers had not been men of abilities, superior to those of James III., and of considerable interest even with their enemies, who could not agree among themselves what victims to sacrifice, the camp of Fala would have been as remarkable as that of Lauder, for the daring encroachments of the nobility on the prerogative of the Prince. But though his ministers were saved by this accident, the nobles had soon another opportunity of discovering to the King their dissatisfaction with his government, and their contempt of his authority. Scarcity of provisions, and the rigour of the season, having obliged the English army, which had invaded Scotland, to retire, James imagined that he could attack them with great advantage in their retreat: but the principal barons, with an obstinacy and disdain which greatly aggravated their disobedience, refused to advance a step beyond the limits of their own country. Provoked by this insult to himself, and suspicious of a new conspiracy against his ministers, the King instantly disbanded an army which paid so little regard to his orders, and returned abruptly into the heart of the kingdom.

BOOK I. An ambitious and high-spirited Prince could not brook such a mortifying affront. His hopes of success had been rash, and his despair upon a disappointment was excessive. He felt himself engaged in an unnecessary war with England, which, instead of yielding him the laurels and triumphs that he expected, had begun with such circumstances as encouraged the insolence of his subjects, and exposed him to the scorn of his enemies. He saw how vain and ineffectual all his projects to humble the nobles had been; and that, though in times of peace a Prince may endeavour to depress them, they will rise during war to their former importance and dignity. Impatience, resentment, indignation, filled his bosom by turns. The violence of these passions altered his temper, and perhaps impaired his reason. He became pensive, sullen, and retired. He seemed through the day to be swallowed up in profound meditation, and through the night he was disturbed with those visionary terrors which make impression upon a weak understanding only, or a disordered fancy. In order to revive the King's spirits, an inroad on the western borders was concerted by his ministers, who prevailed upon the barons in the neighbouring provinces to raise as many troops as were thought necessary, and to enter the enemy's country. But nothing could remove the King's aversion to his nobility, or diminish his jealousy of their power. He would not even intrust them with the command of the forces which they had assembled; that was reserved for Oliver Sinclair his favourite, who no sooner appeared to take possession of the dignity conferred upon him, than rage and

indignation occasioned an universal mutiny in the army. Five hundred English, who happened to be drawn up in sight, attacked the Scots in this disorder. Hatred to the King, and contempt of their general, produced an effect to which there is no parallel in history. They overcame the fear of death, and the love of liberty; and ten thousand men fled before a number so far inferior, without striking a single blow. No man was desirous of a victory which would have been acceptable to the King, and to his favourite; few endeavoured to save themselves by flight; the English had the choice of what prisoners they pleased to take; and almost every person of distinction, who was engaged in the expedition, remained in their hands[f]. This astonishing event was a new proof to the King of the general disaffection of the nobility, and a new discovery of his own weakness and want of authority. Incapable of bearing these repeated insults, he found himself unable to revenge them. The deepest melancholy and despair succeeded to the furious transports of rage, which the first account of the rout of his army occasioned. All the violent passions which are the enemies of life, preyed upon his mind, and wasted and consumed a youthful and vigorous constitution. Some authors of that age impute his untimely death to poison; but the diseases of the mind, when they rise to an height, are often mortal; and

[f] According to an account of this event in the Hamilton MSS. about thirty were killed, above a thousand were taken prisoners; and among them, a hundred and fifty persons of condition. Vol. ii. 286. The small number of the English prevented their taking more prisoners.

BOOK I. the known effects of disappointment, anger, and resentment upon a sanguine and impetuous temper, sufficiently account for his unhappy fate. "His death (says Drummond) proveth his mind to have been raised to an high strain, and above mediocrity; he could die, but could not digest a disaster." Had James survived this misfortune, one of two things must have happened: either the violence of his temper would have engaged him openly to attack the nobles, who would have found in Henry a willing and powerful protector, and have derived the same assistance from him, which the malecontents, in the succeeding reign, did from his daughter Elizabeth; in that case, a dangerous civil war must have been the certain consequence. Or, perhaps, necessity might have obliged him to accept of Henry's offers, and be reconciled to his nobility. In that event, the church would have fallen a sacrifice to their union; a reformation, upon Henry's plan, would have been established by law; a great part of the temporalities of the church would have been seized; and the friendship of the King and barons would have been cemented by dividing its spoils.

Such were the efforts of our Kings towards reducing the exorbitant power of the nobles. If they were not attended with success, we must not for that reason conclude that they were not conducted with prudence. Every circumstance seems to have combined against the crown. Accidental events concurred with political causes, in rendering the best concerted measures abortive. The assassination of one King, the sudden death of another,

and the fatal despair of a third, contributed, no less than its own natural strength, to preserve the aristocracy from ruin.

The extraordinary influence of the Scottish Kings in parliament.

Amidst these struggles, the influence which our Kings possessed in their parliaments is a circumstance seemingly inexplicable, and which merits particular attention. As these assemblies were composed chiefly of the nobles, they, we are apt to imagine, must have dictated all their decisions; but, instead of this, every King found them obsequious to his will, and obtained such laws as he deemed necessary for extending his authority. All things were conducted there with dispatch and unanimity; and in none of our historians do we find an instance of any opposition formed against the court in parliament, or mention of any difficulty in carrying through the measures which were agreeable to the King. In order to account for this singular fact, it is necessary to inquire into the origin and constitution of parliament.

The reasons of it.

The genius of the feudal government, uniform in all its operations, produced the same effects in small as in great societies; and the territory of a baron was, in miniature, the model of a kingdom. He possessed the right of jurisdiction, but those who depended on him being free men, and not slaves, could be tried by their peers only; and, therefore, his vassals were bound to attend his courts, and to assist both in passing and executing his sentences. When assembled on these occasions, they established, by mutual consent, such regulations as tended to the welfare of their small society; and often granted, voluntarily, such supplies

BOOK I. to their *Superior*, as his necessities required. Change now a single name; in place of baron, substitute king, and we behold a parliament in its first rudiments, and observe the first exertions of those powers, which its members now possess as judges, as legislators, and as dispensers of the public revenues. Suitable to this idea, are the appellations of the *King's Court*[g], and of the *King's Great Council*, by which parliaments were anciently distinguished; and suitable to this, likewise, were the constituent members of which it was composed. In all the feudal kingdoms, such as held of the King *in chief* were bound, by the condition of their tenure, to attend and to assist in his courts. Nor was this esteemed a privilege, but a service[h]. It was exacted likewise of bishops, abbots, and the greater ecclesiastics, who, holding vast possessions of the crown, were deemed subject to the same burden. Parliaments did not continue long in this state. Cities gradually acquired wealth, a considerable share of the public taxes were levied on them, the inhabitants grew into estimation, and, being enfranchised by the sovereign, a place in parliament was the consequence of their liberty, and of their importance. But as it would have been absurd to confer such a privilege, or to impose such a burden, on a whole community, every borough was permitted to choose one or two of its citizens to appear in the name of the corporation; and the idea of *representation* was first introduced in this manner. An in-

[g] Du Cange, voc. Curia.

[h] Du Cange, voc. Placitum, col. 519. Magna Charta, art. 14. Act. Jac. I. 1425. cap. 52.

novation, still more important, naturally followed. The vassals of the crown were originally few in number, and extremely powerful; but as it is impossible to render property fixed and permanent, many of their possessions came, gradually, and by various methods of alienation, to be split and parcelled out into different hands. Hence arose the distinction between the *Greater* and the *Lesser barons*. The former were those who retained their original fiefs undivided, the latter were the new and less potent vassals of the crown. Both were bound, however, to perform all feudal services, and, of consequence, to give attendance in parliament. To the lesser barons, who formed no inconsiderable body, this was an intolerable grievance. Barons sometimes denied their tenure, boroughs renounced their right of electing, charters were obtained containing an exemption from attendance; and the anxiety with which our ancestors endeavoured to get free from the obligation of sitting in parliament, is surpassed by that only with which their posterity solicit to be admitted there. In order to accommodate both parties at once, to secure to the King a sufficient number of members in his great council, and to save his vassals from an unnecessary burden, an easy expedient was found out. The obligation to personal attendance was continued upon the greater barons, from which the lesser barons were exempted, on condition of their electing in each county, a certain number of *representatives*, to appear in their name. Thus a parliament became complete in all its members, and was composed of lords spiritual and temporal, of knights of the shires,

BOOK I. and of burgesses. As many causes contributed to bring government earlier to perfection in England than in Scotland; as the rigour of the feudal institutions abated sooner, and its defects were supplied with greater facility in the one kingdom than in the other; England led the way in all these changes, and burgesses and knights of the shire appeared in the parliaments of that nation before they
A.D. 1326. were heard of in ours. Burgesses were first admitted into the Scottish parliaments by Robert Bruce[i]; and in the preamble to the laws of Robert III., they are ranked among the constituent mem-
1427. bers of that assembly. The lesser barons were indebted to James I. for a statute exempting them from personal attendance, and permitting them to elect representatives: the exemption was eagerly laid hold on; but the privilege was so little valued, that, except one or two instances, it lay neglected during one hundred and sixty years; and James VI. first obliged them to send representatives regularly to parliament[k].

A Scottish parliament, then, consisted anciently of great barons, of ecclesiastics, and a few representatives of boroughs. Nor were these divided, as in England, into two houses, but composed one assembly, in which the Lord Chancellor presided[l]. In

[i] Abercromby, i. 635.

[k] Essays on Brit. Antiq. Ess. II. Dalrymp. Hist. of Feud. Prop. ch. 8.

[l] In England, the peers and commons seem early to have met in separate houses; and James I., who was fond of imitating the English in all their customs, had probably an intention of introducing some considerable distinction between the greater

rude ages, when the science of government was extremely imperfect among a martial people, unacquainted with the arts of peace, strangers to the talents which make a figure in debate, and despising them, parliaments were not held in the same estimation as at present; nor did haughty barons love those courts, in which they appeared with such evident marks of inferiority. Parliaments were often hastily assembled, and it was, probably, in the King's power, by the manner in which he issued his writs for that purpose, to exclude such as were averse from his measures. At a time when deeds of violence were common, and the restraints of law and decency were little regarded, no man could venture with safety to oppose the King in his own court. The great barons, or lords of parliament, were extremely few; even so late as the beginning of the reign of James VI.[m], they amounted only to fifty-three. The ecclesiastics equalled them in number, and being devoted implicitly to the crown, for reasons which have been already explained, rendered all hopes of victory in any struggle desperate. Nor

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and lesser barons in Scotland; at least he determined that their consultations should not be carried on under the direction of the same president, for by his law, A. D. 1327, it is provided, "that out of the commissioners of all the shires shall be chosen a wise and expert man, called the common speaker of the parliament, who shall propose all and sundry needs and causes pertaining to the commons in the parliament or general council." No such speaker, it would seem, was ever chosen; and by a subsequent law the Chancellor was declared perpetual president of parliament.

[m] And. Coll. vol. i. pref. 40.

BOOK I. were the nobles themselves so anxious as might be imagined, to prevent acts of parliament favourable to the royal prerogative: conscious of their own strength, and of the King's inability to carry these acts into execution without their concurrence, they trusted that they might either elude or venture to contemn them; and the statute revoking the King's property, and annexing alienated jurisdictions to the crown, repeated in every reign, and violated and despised as often, is a standing proof of the impotence of laws when opposed to power. So many concurring causes are sufficient, perhaps, to account for the ascendant which our Kings acquired in parliament. But, without having recourse to any of these, a single circumstance, peculiar to the constitution of the Scottish parliament, the mentioning of which we have hitherto avoided, will abundantly explain this fact, seemingly so repugnant to all our reasonings concerning the weakness of the King, and the power of the nobles.

As far back as our records enable us to trace the constitution of our parliaments, we find a committee distinguished by the name of *Lords of Articles*. It was their business to prepare and to digest all matters which were to be laid before the parliament. There was rarely any business introduced into parliament, but what had passed through the channel of this committee; every motion for a new law was first made there, and approved of or rejected by the members of it; what they approved was formed into a bill, and presented to parliament; and it seems probable, that what they rejected could not be introduced into the house. This committee

owed the extraordinary powers vested in it, to the military genius of the ancient nobles: too impatient to submit to the drudgery of civil business, too impetuous to observe the forms or to enter into the details necessary in conducting it, they were glad to lay that burden upon a small number, while they themselves had no other labour than simply to give, or to refuse, their assent to the bills which were presented to them. The lords of articles, then, not only directed all the proceedings of parliament, but possessed a negative before debate. That committee was chosen and constituted in such a manner, as put this valuable privilege entirely in the King's hands. It is extremely probable, that our Kings once had the sole right of nominating the lords of articles[n]. They came afterwards to be

[n] It appears from authentic records, that a parliament was appointed to be held March 12, 1566, and that the lords of articles were chosen and met on the 7th, five days before the assembling of parliament. If they could be regularly elected so long before the meeting of parliament, it is natural to conclude that the Prince alone possessed the right of electing them. There are two different accounts of the manner of their election at that time, one by Mary herself, in a letter to the Archbishop of Glasgow: "We, accompanied with our nobility for the time, past "to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, for holding of our parliament "on the 7th day of this instant, and elected the lords articulard." If we explain these words according to the strict grammar, we must conclude that the Queen herself elected them. It is, however, more probable that Mary meant to say, that the nobles then present with her, viz. her privy counsellors, and others, elected the lords of articles. Keith's Hist. of Scotland, p. 331. The other account is Lord Ruthven's, who expressly affirms that the Queen herself elected them. Keith's Append. 126. Whether we embrace the one or other of these opinions, is of no consequence. If the privy counsellors and nobles attending the

BOOK I. elected by the parliament, and consisted of an equal number out of each estate, and most commonly of eight temporal and eight spiritual lords, of eight representatives of boroughs, and of the eight great officers of the crown. Of this body, the eight ecclesiastics, together with the officers of the crown, were entirely at the King's devotion, and it was scarce possible that the choice could fall on such temporal lords and burgesses as would unite in opposition to his measures. Capable either of influencing their election, or of gaining them when elected, the King commonly found the lords of articles no less obsequious to his will, than his own privy council; and, by means of his authority with them, he could put a negative upon his parliament before debate, as well as after it; and, what may seem altogether incredible, the most limited Prince in Europe actually possessed, in one instance, a prerogative which the most absolute could never attain[o].

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court had a right to elect the lords of articles, it was equally advantageous for the crown, as if the Prince had had the sole nomination of them.

[o] Having deduced the history of the Committee of Lords of Articles as low as the subject of this preliminary book required, it may be agreeable, perhaps, to some of my readers, to know the subsequent variations in this singular institution, and the political use which our Kings made of these. When parliaments became more numerous, and more considerable by the admission of the representatives of the lesser barons, the preserving their influence over the lords of articles became, likewise, an object of greater importance to our Kings. James VI., on pretence that the lords of articles could not find leisure to consider the great multitude of affairs laid before them, obtained an act, appointing four persons to be named out of each *estate*, who

BOOK I.

State of Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

To this account of the internal constitution of Scotland, it will not be improper to add a view of the political state of Europe at that period, where the following history commences. A thorough knowledge of that general system, of which every kingdom in Europe forms a part, is not less requisite towards understanding the history of a nation, than an acquaintance with its peculiar government and laws. The latter may enable us to comprehend domestic occurrences and revolutions; but without the former, foreign transactions must be altogether mysterious and unintelligible. By attending to this, many dark passages in our history may be placed in a clear light; and where the bulk of historians have

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should meet twenty days before the commencement of parliament*, to receive all supplications, &c. and, rejecting what they thought frivolous, should engross in a book what they thought worthy the attention of the lords of articles. No provision is made in the act for the choice of this select body, and the King would, of course, have claimed that privilege. In 1633, when Charles I. was beginning to introduce those innovations which gave so much offence to the nation, he dreaded the opposition of his parliament, and in order to prevent that, an artifice was made use of to secure the lords of articles for the crown. The temporal peers were appointed to choose eight bishops; and the bishops eight peers; these sixteen met together, and elected eight knights of the shire, and eight burgesses, and to these the crown officers were added as usual. If we can only suppose eight persons of so numerous a body, as the peers of Scotland were become by that time, attached to the court, these, it is obvious, would be the men whom the bishops would choose, and of consequence the whole lords of articles were the tools and creatures of the King. This practice, so inconsistent with liberty, was abolished during the civil war; and the statute of James VI. was repealed. After the restoration, parliaments became more ser-

* Act 222. P. 1594.

BOOK I. seen only the effect, we may be able to discover the cause.

The subversion of the feudal government in France, and its declension in the neighbouring kingdoms, occasioned a remarkable alteration in the political state of Europe. Kingdoms, which were inconsiderable when broken, and parcelled out among nobles, acquired firmness and strength by being united into a regular monarchy. Kings became conscious of their own power and importance. They meditated schemes of conquest, and engaged in wars at a distance. Numerous armies were raised, and great taxes imposed for their subsistence. Considerable bodies of infantry were kept in constant pay; that service grew to be honourable; and cavalry, in which the strength of Euro-

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vile than ever. What was only a temporary device, in the reign of Charles I. was then converted into a standing law. "For "my part," says the author from whom I have borrowed many of these particulars, "I should have thought it less criminal in "our Restoration Parliament, to have openly bestowed upon "the King a negative before debate, than, in such an under-"hand artificial manner, to betray their constituents, and the "nation." Essays on Brit. Antiq. 55. It is probable, however, from a letter of Randolph's to Cecil, 10 Aug. 1560, printed in the Appendix, that this parliament had some appearance of ancient precedent to justify their unworthy conduct. Various questions concerning the constituent members of the Scottish parliament; concerning the æra at which the representatives of boroughs were introduced into that assembly; and concerning the origin and power of the committee of lords of articles, occur, and have been agitated with great warmth. Since the first publication of this work, all these disputed points have been considered with calmness and accuracy in Mr. Wight's Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of Parliament, &c. 4to Edit. p. 17, &c.

pean armies had hitherto consisted, though proper enough for the short and voluntary excursions of barons who served at their own expense, were found to be unfit either for making or defending any important conquest.

It was in Italy that the powerful monarchs of France and Spain and Germany first appeared to make a trial of their new strength. The division of that country into many small states, the luxury of the people, and their effeminate aversion to arms, invited their more martial neighbours to an easy prey. The Italians, who had been accustomed to mock battles only, and to decide their interior quarrels by innocent and bloodless victories, were astonished, when the French invaded their country, at the sight of real war; and, as they could not resist the torrent, they suffered it to take its course, and to spend its rage. Intrigue and policy supplied the want of strength. Necessity and self-preservation led that ingenious people to the great secret of modern politics, by teaching them how to balance the power of one Prince, by throwing that of another into the opposite scale. By this happy device, the liberty of Italy was long preserved. The scales were poised by very skilful hands; the smallest variations were attended to, and no Prince was allowed to retain any superiority that could be dangerous.

A system of conduct, pursued with so much success in Italy, was not long confined to that country of political refinement. The maxim of preserving a balance of power is founded so much upon obvious reasoning, and the situation of Europe rendered it so necessary, that it soon become a matter of

BOOK chief attention to all wise politicians. Every step any Prince took was observed by all his neighbours. Ambassadors, a kind of honourable spies, authorized by the mutual jealousy of Kings, resided almost constantly at every different court, and had it in charge to watch all its motions. Dangers were foreseen at a greater distance, and prevented with more ease. Confederacies were formed to humble any power which rose above its due proportion. Revenge or self-defence were no longer the only causes of hostility, it became common to take arms out of policy; and war, both in its commencement and in its operations, was more an exercise of the judgement than of the passions of men. Almost every war in Europe became general, and the most inconsiderable states acquired importance, because they could add weight to either scale.

Francis I., who mounted the throne of France in the year one thousand five hundred and fifteen, and Charles V., who obtained the Imperial crown in the year one thousand five hundred and nineteen, divided between them the strength and affections of all Europe. Their perpetual enmity was not owing solely either to personal jealousy, or to the caprice of private passion, but was founded so much in nature and true policy, that it subsisted between their posterity for several ages. Charles succeeded to all the dominions of the house of Austria. No family had ever gained so much by wise and fortunate marriages. By acquisitions of this kind, the Austrian Princes rose, in a short time, from obscure Counts of Hapsbourg, to be Archdukes of Austria and Kings of Bohemia, and were in possession of the Impe-

rial dignity by a sort of hereditary right. Besides these territories in Germany, Charles was heir to the crown of Spain, and to all the dominions which belonged to the house of Burgundy. The Burgundian provinces engrossed, at that time, the riches and commerce of one half of Europe; and he drew from them, on many occasions, those immense sums, which no people without trade and liberty are able to contribute. Spain furnished him a gallant and hardy infantry, to whose discipline he was indebted for all his conquests. At the same time, by the discovery of the new world, a vein of wealth was opened to him, which all the extravagance of ambition could not exhaust. These advantages rendered Charles the first Prince in Europe; but he wished to be more, and openly aspired to universal monarchy. His genius was of that kind which ripens slowly, and lies long concealed; but it grew up, without observation, to an unexpected height and vigour. He possessed, in an eminent degree, the characteristic virtues of all the different races of Princes to whom he was allied. In forming his schemes, he discovered all the subtlety and penetration of Ferdinand his grandfather; he pursued them with that obstinate and inflexible perseverance which has ever been peculiar to the Austrian blood; and in executing them he could employ the magnanimity and boldness of his Burgundian ancestors. His abilities were equal to his power; and neither of them would have been inferior to his designs, had not Providence, in pity to mankind, and in order to preserve them from the worst of all evils, Universal Monarchy, raised up Francis I. to defend the liberty

BOOK I. of Europe. His dominions were less extensive, but more united, than the Emperor's. His subjects were numerous, active, and warlike, lovers of glory, and lovers of their King. To Charles, power was the only object of desire, and he pursued it with an unwearied and joyless industry. Francis could mingle pleasure and elegance with his ambition; and, though he neglected some advantages, which a more phlegmatic or more frugal Prince would have improved, an active and intrepid courage supplied all his defects, and checked or defeated many of the Emperor's designs.

The rest of Europe observed all the motions of these mighty rivals with a jealous attention. On the one side, the Italians saw the danger which threatened Christendom, and, in order to avert it, had recourse to the expedient which they had often employed with success. They endeavoured to divide the power of the two contending monarchs into equal scales, and, by the union of several small states, to counterpoise him whose power became too great. But what they concerted with much wisdom, they were able to execute with little vigour; and intrigue and refinement were feeble fences against the incroachments of military power.

On the other side, Henry VIII. of England held the balance with less delicacy, but with a stronger hand. He was the third Prince of the age in dignity and in power; and the advantageous situation of his dominions, his domestic tranquillity, his immense wealth and absolute authority, rendered him the natural guardian of the liberty of Europe. Each of the rivals courted him with emulation; he

knew it to be his interest to keep the balance even, and to restrain both by not joining entirely with either of them. But he was seldom able to reduce his ideas to practice; he was governed by caprice more than by principle; and the passions of the man were an overmatch for the maxims of the King. Vanity and resentment were the great springs of all his undertakings, and his neighbours easily found the way, by touching these, to force him upon many rash and inconsistent enterprises. His reign was a perpetual series of blunders in politics; and while he esteemed himself the wisest Prince in Europe, he was a constant dupe to those who found it necessary, and could submit, to flatter him.

In this situation of Europe, Scotland, which had hitherto wasted her strength in the quarrels between France and England, emerged from her obscurity, took her station in the system, and began to have some influence upon the fate of distant nations. Her assistance was frequently of consequence to the contending parties, and the balance was often so nicely adjusted, that it was in her power to make it lean to either side. The part assigned her, at this juncture, was to divert Henry from carrying his arms into the continent. That Prince having routed the French at Guinegat and invested Terouënne, France attempted to divide his forces, by engaging James IV. in that unhappy expedition which ended with his life. For the same reason Francis encouraged and assisted the Duke of Albany to ruin the families of Angus and Home, which were in the interest of England, and would

BOOK I. willingly have persuaded the Scots to revenge the death of their King, and to enter into a new war with that kingdom. Henry and Francis having united not long after against the Emperor, it was the interest of both Kings, that the Scots should continue inactive; and a long tranquillity was the effect of their union. Charles endeavoured to break this, and to embarrass Henry by another inroad of the Scots. For this end he made great advances to James V., flattering the vanity of the young monarch by electing him a Knight of the Golden Fleece, and by offering him a match in the Imperial family; while, in return for these empty honours, he demanded of him to renounce his alliance with France, and to declare war against England. But James, who had much to lose, and who could gain little by closing with the Emperor's proposals, rejected them with decency, and, keeping firm to his ancient allies, left Henry at full liberty to act upon the continent with his whole strength.

Henry himself began his reign by imitating the example of his ancestors with regard to Scotland. He held its power in such extreme contempt, that he was at no pains to gain its friendship; but, on the contrary, he irritated the whole nation, by reviving the antiquated pretensions of the crown of England to the sovereignty over Scotland. But his own experience, and the examples of his enemies, gave him a higher idea of its importance. It was impossible to defend an open and extensive frontier against the incursions of an active and martial people. During any war on the continent, this obliged him to divide the strength of his kingdom,

It was necessary to maintain a kind of army of observation in the north of England; and, after all precautions, the Scottish borderers, who were superior to all mankind in the practice of irregular war, often made successful inroads, and spread terror and desolation over many counties. He fell, at last, upon the true secret of policy, with respect to Scotland, which his predecessors had too little penetration to discover, or too much pride to employ. The situation of the country, and the bravery of the people, made the conquest of Scotland impossible; but the national poverty, and the violence of faction, rendered it an easy matter to divide and to govern it. He abandoned, therefore, the former design, and resolved to employ his utmost address in executing the latter. It had not yet become honourable for one Prince to receive pay from another, under the more decent name of a subsidy. But, in all ages, the same arguments have been good in courts, and of weight with ministers, factious leaders, and favourites. What were the arguments by which Henry brought over so many to his interest during the minority of James V. we know by the original warrant still extant [p], for remitting considerable sums into Scotland. By a proper distribution of these, many persons of note were gained to his party, and a faction, which held secret correspondence with England, and received all its directions from thence, appears henceforward in our domestic contests. In the sequel of the history, we shall find Henry labouring to extend his influ-

[p] Burn. Hist. Ref. vol. i. p. 7.

BOOK I. ence in Scotland. His successors adopted the same plan, and improved upon it. The affairs of the two kingdoms became interwoven, and their interests were often the same. Elizabeth divided her attention almost equally between them; and the authority which she inherited in the one, was not greater than that which she acquired in the other.

THE

HISTORY

OF

SCOTLAND.

BOOK II.

BOOK II.

Birth of Mary, Dec. 8, 1542, and state of the kingdom.

MARY, Queen of Scots, the daughter of James V. and Mary of Guise, was born a few days before the death of her father. The situation in which he left the kingdom alarmed all ranks of men with the prospect of a turbulent and disastrous reign. A war against England had been undertaken without necessity, and carried on without success. Many persons of the first rank had fallen into the hands of the English, in the unfortunate rout near the firth of Solway, and were still prisoners at London. Among the rest of the nobles there was little union either in their views or in their affections; and the religious disputes, occasioned by the opinions of the Reformers, growing every day more violent, added to the rage of those factions which are natural to a form of government nearly aristocratical.

The government of a Queen was unknown in Scotland, and did not imprint much reverence in

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the minds of a martial people. The government of an infant Queen was still more destitute of real authority; and the prospect of a long and feeble minority invited to faction by the hope of impunity. James had not even provided the common remedy against the disorders of a minority, by committing to proper persons the care of his daughter's education, and the administration of affairs in her name. Though he saw the clouds gathering, and foretold that they would quickly burst into a storm, he was so little able to disperse them, or to defend his daughter and kingdom against the imminent calamities, that, in mere despair, he abandoned them both to the mercy of fortune, and left open to every pretender the office of Regent, which he could not fix to his own satisfaction.

Pretensions of Cardinal Beatoun to the Regency.

Cardinal Beatoun, who had for many years been considered as prime minister, was the first that claimed that high dignity; and, in support of his pretensions, he produced a testament[a], which he himself had forged in the name of the late King; and, without any other right, instantly assumed the title of Regent. He hoped by the assistance of the clergy, the countenance of France, the connivance of the Queen Dowager, and the support of the whole Popish faction, to hold by force what he had seized on by fraud. But Beatoun had enjoyed power too long to be a favourite of the nation. Those among the nobles who wished for a reformation in religion dreaded his severity, and others considered the elevation of a churchman to the highest

[a] Sadler's Lett. 161. Haynes, State Papers, 486.

office in the kingdom as a depression of themselves. At their instigation, James Hamilton Earl of Arran, and next heir to the Queen, roused himself from his inactivity, and was prevailed on to aspire to that station to which proximity of blood gave him a natural title. The nobles, who were assembled for that purpose, unanimously conferred on him the office of Regent; and the public voice applauded their choice [b].

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Earl of Arran chosen Regent.

No two men ever differed more widely in disposition and character, than the Earl of Arran and Cardinal Beatoun. The Cardinal was by nature of immoderate ambition: by long experience he had acquired address and refinement; and insolence grew upon him from continual success. His high station in the church placed him in the way of great civil employments; his abilities were equal to the greatest of these: nor did he reckon any of them to be above his merit. As his own eminence was founded upon the power of the church of Rome, he was a zealous defender of that superstition, and for the same reason an avowed enemy to the doctrine of the Reformers. Political motives alone determined him to support the one, or to oppose the other. His early application to public business kept him unacquainted with the learning and controversies of the age; he gave judgment, however, upon all points in dispute, with a precipitancy, violence, and rigour, which contemporary historians mention with indignation.

Character of Beatoun;

The character of the Earl of Arran was, in almost

of Arran.

[b] Epist. Reg. Scot. vol. ii. p. 308.

BOOK II. every thing, the reverse of Beatoun's. He was neither infected with ambition, nor inclined to cruelty: the love of ease extinguished the former, the gentleness of his temper preserved him from the latter. Timidity and irresolution were his predominant failings; the one occasioned by his natural constitution, and the other arising from a consciousness that his abilities were not equal to his station. With these dispositions he might have enjoyed and adorned private life: but his public conduct was without courage, or dignity, or consistence; the perpetual slave of his own fears, and, by consequence, the perpetual tool of those who found their advantage in practising upon them. But, as no other person could be set in opposition to the Cardinal, with any probability of success, the nation declared in his favour with such general consent, that the artifices of his rival could not withstand its united strength.

Schemes of Henry VIII. with regard to Scotland.

The Earl of Arran had scarce taken possession of his new dignity, when a negotiation was opened with England, which gave birth to events of the most fatal consequence to himself, and to the kingdom. After the death of James, Henry VIII. was no longer afraid of any interruption from Scotland to his designs against France; and immediately conceived hopes of rendering this security perpetual, by the marriage of Edward his only son with the young Queen of Scots. He communicated his intentions to the prisoners taken at Solway, and prevailed on them to favour it, by the promise of liberty, as the reward of their success. In the mean time he permitted them to return into Scotland, that, by their

presence in the parliament which the Regent had called, they might be the better able to persuade their countrymen to fall in with his proposals. A cause intrusted to such able and zealous advocates, could not well miss of coming to an happy issue. All those who feared the Cardinal, or who desired a change in religion, were fond of an alliance, which afforded protection to the doctrine which they had embraced, as well as to their own persons, against the rage of that powerful and haughty prelate.

Ill conducted by himself.

But Henry's rough and impatient temper was incapable of improving this favourable conjuncture. Address and delicacy in managing the fears, and follies, and interests of men, were arts with which he was utterly unacquainted. The designs he had formed upon Scotland were obvious from the marriage which he had proposed, and he had not dexterity enough to disguise or to conceal them. Instead of yielding to the fear or jealousy of the Scots, what time and accident would soon have enabled him to recover, he at once alarmed and irritated the whole nation, by demanding that the Queen's person should be immediately committed to his custody, and that the government of the kingdom should be put into his hands during her minority.

Odious to the Scots, though in part accepted by them.

Henry could not have prescribed more ignominious conditions to a conquered people, and it is no wonder they were rejected, with indignation, by men who scorned to purchase an alliance with England at the price of their own liberty. The parliament of Scotland, however, influenced by the nobles who returned from England; desirous of peace with that kingdom; and delivered, by the Regent's con-

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March 12, 1543.

fining the Cardinal as a prisoner, from an opposition to which he might have given rise; consented to a treaty of marriage and of union, but upon terms somewhat more equal. After some dark and unsuccessful intrigues, by which his ambassador endeavoured to carry off the young Queen and Cardinal Beatoun into England, Henry was obliged to give up his own proposals, and to accept of theirs. On his side he consented that the Queen should continue to reside in Scotland, and himself remain excluded from any share in the government of the kingdom. On the other hand, the Scots agreed to send their Sovereign into England as soon as she attained the full age of ten years, and instantly to deliver six persons of the first rank to be kept as hostages by Henry till the Queen's arrival at his court.

Favoured by the Regent.

The treaty was still so manifestly of advantage to England, that the Regent lost much of the public confidence by consenting to it. The Cardinal, who had now recovered liberty, watched for such an opportunity of regaining credit, and he did not fail to cultivate and improve this to the utmost. He complained loudly that the Regent had betrayed the kingdom to its most inveterate enemies, and sacrificed its honour to his own ambition. He foretold the extinction of the true Catholic religion, under the tyranny of an excommunicated heretic; but, above all, he lamented to see an ancient kingdom consenting to its own servitude, descending into the ignominious station of a dependent province; and, in one hour, the weakness or treachery of a single man surrendering every thing for which the Scot-

Opposed by the Cardinal.

tish nation had struggled and fought during so many ages. These remonstrances of the Cardinal were not without effect. They were addressed to prejudices and passions which are deeply rooted in the human heart. The same hatred to the ancient enemies of their country, the same jealousy of national honour, and pride of independence, which, at the beginning of the present century, went near to prevent the Scots from consenting to an union with England, upon terms of great advantage, did, at that time, induce the whole nation to declare against the alliance which had been concluded. In the one period, an hundred and fifty years of peace between the two nations, the habit of being subjected to the same King, and governed by the same maxims, had considerably abated old animosities, and prepared both people for incorporating. In the other, injuries were still fresh, the wounds on both sides were open, and, in the warmth of resentment, it was natural to seek revenge, and to be averse from reconcilement. At the Union in one thousand seven hundred and seven, the wisdom of Parliament despised the groundless murmurs occasioned by antiquated prejudices; but in one thousand five hundred and forty-three, the complaints of the nation were better founded, and urged with a zeal and unanimity, which it is neither just nor safe to disregard. A rash measure of the English Monarch added greatly to the violence of this national animosity. The Scots, relying on the treaty of marriage and union, fitted out several ships for France, with which their trade had been interrupted for some time. These were driven by stress

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of weather to take refuge in different ports of England; and Henry, under pretext that they were carrying provisions to a kingdom with which he was at war, ordered them to be seized and condemned as lawful prizes[c]. The Scots, astonished at this proceeding of a Prince whose interest it was manifestly at that juncture to court and to sooth them, felt it not only as an injury but as an insult, and expressed all the resentment natural to a high-spirited people[d]. Their rage rose to such an height, that the English ambassador could hardly be protected from it. One spirit seemed now to animate all orders of men. The clergy offered to contribute a great sum towards preserving the church from the dominion of a Prince, whose system of reformation was so fatal to their power. The nobles, after having mortified the Cardinal so lately in such a cruel manner, were now ready to applaud and to second him, as the defender of the honour and liberty of his country.

He excites

Argyll, Huntly, Bothwell, and other powerful ba-

c Keith, 32. 34. Epist. Reg. Scot. ii. App. 311. Hamilton MSS. vol. i. p. 389.

d In the MS. Collection of Papers belonging to the Duke of Hamilton, Sir Ralph Sadler describes the spirit of the Scots as extremely outrageous. In his letter from Edinburgh, September 1, 1543, he says: "The stay of the ships has brought the people of this town, both men and women, and especially the merchants, into such a rage and fury, that the whole town is commoved against me, and swear great oaths, if their ships are not restored, that they would have their amends of me and mine, and that they would set my house here on fire over my head, so that one of us should not escape alive; and also it hath much incensed and provoked the people against the governor, saying, that he hath coloured a peace with Your Majesty only to undo them. This is the unreasonableness of the people which live

rons, declared openly against the alliance with England. By their assistance, the Cardinal seized on the persons of the young Queen and her mother, and added to his party the splendour and authority of the royal name[e]. He received, at the same time, a more real accession to his strength, by the arrival of Matthew Stewart Earl of Lennox, whose return from France he had earnestly solicited. This young nobleman was the hereditary enemy of the house of Hamilton. He had many claims upon the Regent, and pretended a right to exclude him, not only from succeeding to the crown, but to deprive him of the possession of his private fortune. The Cardinal flattered his vanity with the prospect of marrying the Queen Dowager, and affected to treat him with so much respect, that the Regent became jealous of him as a rival in power.

almost the whole nation against the English.

This suspicion was artfully heightened by the

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here in such a beastly liberty, that they neither regard God nor governor; nor yet justice, or any good policy, doth take place among them; assuring Your Highness that, unless the ships be delivered, there will be none abiding here for me without danger." Vol. i. 451. In his letter of September 5, he writes that the rage of the people still continued so violent, "that neither I nor any of my folks dare go out of my doors; and the provost of the town, who hath much ado to stay them from assaulting me in my house, and keepeth watch therefore nightly, hath sent to me sundry times, and prayed me to keep myself and my folks within, for it is scant in his power to repress or resist the fury of the people. They say plainly, I shall never pass out of the town alive, except they have their ships restored. This is the rage and beastliness of this nation, which God keep all honest men from." Ib. 471.

[e] Keith's Hist. of Scotl. 30.

BOOK II. Abbot of Paisley, who returned into Scotland some time before the Earl of Lennox, and acted in concert with the Cardinal. He was a natural brother of the Regent, with whom he had great credit; a warm partisan of France, and a zealous defender of the established religion. He took hold of the Regent by the proper handle, and endeavoured to bring about a change in his sentiments by working upon his fears. The desertion of the nobility, the disaffection of the clergy, and the rage of the people; the resentment of France, the power of the Cardinal, and the pretensions of Lennox, were all represented with aggravation, and with their most threatening aspect.

Meanwhile, the day appointed for the ratification of the treaty with England, and the delivery of the hostages, approached, and the Regent was still undetermined in his own mind. He acted to the last, with that irresolution and inconsistence which is peculiar to weak men when they are so unfortunate as to have the chief part in the conduct of difficult affairs. On the 25th of August, he ratified a treaty with Henry[f], and proclaimed the Cardinal, who still continued to oppose it, an enemy to his country. On the third of September he secretly withdrew from Edinburgh, met with the Cardinal at Callendar, renounced the friendship of England, and declared for the interests of France[g].

Obliges the Regent to renounce the friendship with England,

Henry, in order to gain the Regent, had not spared the most magnificent promises. He had offered to give the Princess Elizabeth in marriage

[f] Rymer, Fœd. xv. p. 4.

[g] Sadler, 339. 356. Hamilton MSS. i. 470, &c.

to his eldest son, and to constitute him King of that part of Scotland which lies beyond the river Forth. But, upon finding his interest in the kingdom to be less considerable than he had imagined, the English Monarch began to treat him with little respect. The young Queen was now in the custody of his enemies, who grew every day more numerous and more popular. They formed a separate court at Stirling, and threatened to elect another Regent. The French King was ready to afford them his protection, and the nation, out of hatred to the English, would have united in their defence. In this situation, the Regent could not retain his authority without a sudden change of his measures; and though he endeavoured, by ratifying the treaty, to preserve the appearances of good faith with England, he was obliged to throw himself into the arms of the party which adhered to France.

and to persecute the Reformers.

Soon after this sudden revolution in his political principles, the Regent changed his sentiments concerning religion. The spirit of controversy was then new and warm; books of that kind were eagerly read by men of every rank; the love of novelty, or the conviction of truth, had led the Regent to express great esteem for the writings of the Reformers; and having been powerfully supported by those who had embraced their opinions, he, in order to gratify them, entertained, in his own family, two of the most noted preachers of the Protestant doctrine, and, in his first parliament, consented to an act, by which the laity were permitted to read the scriptures in a language which they understood[h]. Truth

[h] Keith, p. 36, 37.

BOOK II. needed only a fair hearing to be an over-match for error. Absurdities, which had long imposed on the ignorance and credulity of mankind, were detected and exposed to public ridicule; and, under the countenance of the Regent, the Reformation made great advances. The Cardinal observed its progress with concern, and was at the utmost pains to obstruct it. He represented to the Regent his great imprudence in giving encouragement to opinions so favourable to Lennox's pretensions; that his own legitimacy depended upon the validity of a sentence of divorce, founded on the Pope's authority; and that by suffering it to be called in question, he weakened his own title to the succession, and furnished his rival with the only argument by which it could be rendered doubtful[i]. These insinuations made a deep impression on the Regent's timorous spirit, who, at the prospect of such imaginary danger, was as much startled as the Cardinal could have wished; and his zeal for the Protestant religion was not long proof against his fear. He publicly abjured the doctrine of the Reformers in

[i] The pretensions of the Earl of Lennox to the succession were thus founded. Mary, the daughter of James II. was married to James Lord Hamilton, whom James III. created Earl of Arran on that account. Elizabeth, a daughter of that marriage, was the wife of Matthew Earl of Lennox, and the present Earl was her grandson. The Regent was likewise the grandson of the Princess Mary. But his father having married Janet Beatoun the Regent's mother, after he had obtained a divorce from Elizabeth Home his former wife, Lennox pretended that the sentence of divorce was unjust, and that the Regent being born while Elizabeth Home was still alive, ought to be considered as illegitimate. Crawf. Peer. 192.

the Franciscan church at Stirling, and declared not only for the political but the religious opinions of his new confidents.

The Protestant doctrine did not suffer much by his apostasy. It had already taken so deep root in the kingdom, that no discouragement or severity could extirpate it. The Regent indeed consented to every thing that the zeal of the Cardinal thought necessary for the preservation of the established religion. The Reformers were persecuted with all the cruelty which superstition inspires into a barbarous people. Many were condemned to that dreadful death, which the church has appointed for the punishment of its enemies; but they suffered with a spirit so nearly resembling the patience and fortitude of the primitive martyrs, that more were converted than terrified by such spectacles.

Beatoun engrosses the chief direction of affairs.

The Cardinal, however, was now in possession of every thing his ambition could desire; and exercised all the authority of a Regent, without the envy of the name. He had nothing to fear from the Earl of Arran, who having by his inconsistency forfeited the public esteem, was contemned by one half the nation, and little trusted by the other. The pretensions of the Earl of Lennox were the only thing which remained to embarrass him. He had very successfully made use of that nobleman to work upon the Regent's jealousy and fear; but as he no longer stood in need of such an instrument, he was willing to get rid of him with decency. Lennox soon began to suspect his intention; promises, flattery, and respect, were the only returns he had hitherto received for substantial services:

BOOK II. but at last the Cardinal's artifices could no longer be concealed, and Lennox, instead of attaining power and dignity himself, saw that he had been employed only to procure these for another. Resentment and disappointed ambition urged him to seek revenge on that cunning prelate, who, by sacrificing his interest, had so ungenerously purchased the Earl of Arran's friendship. He withdrew, for that reason, from court, and declared for the party at enmity with the Cardinal, which, with open arms, received a convert who added so much lustre to their cause.

The two factions which divided the kingdom were still the same, without any alterations in their views or principles; but, by one of those strange revolutions which were frequent in that age, they had in the course of a few weeks changed their leaders. The Regent was at the head of the partisans of France and the defenders of popery, and Lennox in the same station with the advocates for the English alliance and a reformation in religion. The one laboured to pull down his own work, which the other upheld with the same hand that had hitherto endeavoured to destroy it.

Lennox's impatience for revenge got the start of the Cardinal's activity. He surprised both him and the Regent by a sudden march to Edinburgh with a numerous army; and might easily have crushed them before they could prepare for their defence. But he was weak enough to listen to proposals for an accommodation; and the Cardinal amused him so artfully, and spun out the treaty to such a length, that the greater part of the Earl's troops, who served,

as is usual wherever the feudal institutions prevailed, at their own expense, deserted him; and in concluding a peace, instead of giving the law, he was obliged to receive it. A second attempt to retrieve his affairs ended yet more unfortunately. One body of his troops was cut to pieces, and the rest dispersed; and with the poor remains of a ruined party, he must either have submitted to the conqueror, or have fled out of the kingdom, if the approach of an English army had not brought him a short relief.

Henry invades Scotland.

Henry was not of a temper to bear tamely the indignity with which he had been treated, both by the Regent and Parliament of Scotland, who, at the time when they renounced their alliance with him, had entered into a new and stricter confederacy with France. The rigour of the season retarded for some time the execution of his vengeance. But, in the spring, a considerable body of infantry, which was destined for France, received orders to sail for Scotland, and a proper number of cavalry was appointed to join it by land. The Regent and Cardinal little expected such a visit. They had trusted that the French war would find employment for all Henry's forces, and, from an unaccountable security, were wholly unprovided for the defence of the kingdom. The Earl of Hertford, a leader fatal to the Scots in that age, commanded his army, and landed it, without opposition, a few miles from Leith. He was quickly master of that place; and, marching directly to Edinburgh, entered it with the same ease. After plundering the adjacent country, the richest and most

May 3. 1544.

BOOK II. open in Scotland, he set on fire both these towns, and, upon the approach of some troops gathered together by the Regent, put his booty on board the fleet, and with his land forces retired safely to the English borders; delivering the kingdom in a few days from the terror of an invasion, concerted with little policy, carried on at great expense, and attended with no advantage. If Henry aimed at the conquest of Scotland, he gained nothing by this expedition; if the marriage he had proposed was still in his view, he lost a great deal. Such a rough courtship, as the Earl of Huntly humourously called it, disgusted the whole nation; their aversion for the match grew into abhorrence; and, exasperated by so many indignities, the Scots were never at any period more attached to France, or more alienated from England[k].

[k] The violence of national hatred between the English and Scots in the sixteenth century was such as can hardly be conceived by their posterity. A proof of the fierce resentment of the Scots is contained in the note on pages 298 and 299. The instructions of the Privy Council of England to the Earl of Hertford, who commanded the fleet and army which invaded Scotland, A.D. 1544, are dictated by a national animosity no less excessive. I found them in the collection of papers belonging to the Duke of Hamilton, and they merit publication, as they exhibit a striking picture of the spirit of that period.

The Lords of the Council to the Earl of Hertford, Lieutenant in Scotland, April 10. 1544.

The instruction begins with observing, that the King had originally intended to fortify Leith and keep possession of it; but, after mature deliberation, he had finally determined not to make any settlement in Scotland at present, and therefore he is directed not to make any fortification at Leith, or any other place: "But only for that journey to put all to fire and sword, burn

The Earl of Lennox alone, in spite of the Regent and French King, continued a correspondence with England, which ruined his own interest, without promoting Henry's[1]. Many of his own vassals,

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Edinburgh town, so used and defaced, that when you have gotten what you can of it, it may remain for ever a perpetual memory of the vengeance of God lightened upon it, for their falsehood and disloyalty. Do what you can out of hand, and without long tarrying to beat down or overthrow the castle; sack houses and as many towns and villages about Edinburgh as ye may conveniently. Sack Leith, and subvert it, and all the rest, putting man, woman, and child, to fire and sword, without exception, when any resistance shall be made against you; and this done, pass over to the Fifeland, and extend like extremities and destruction to all towns and villages whereunto you may reach conveniently; not forgetting, amongst all the rest, so to spoil and turn upside down the Cardinal's town of St. Andrew's as the upper sort may be the nether, and not one *stoke* stand upon another, sparing no creature alive within the same, specially such as either in friendship or blood be allied unto the Cardinal; and if ye see any likelyhood to win the castle, give some stout essay to the same, and if it be your fortune to get it, raze and destroy it piece-meal; and after this sort, spending one month there, spoiling and destroying as aforesaid, with the wise foresight that His Majesty doubteth not ye will use that your enemies take no advantage of you, and that you enterprize nothing but what you shall see may be easily atchieved, His Majesty thinketh verily, and so all we, ye shall find this *journey* succeedeth this way most to His Majesty's honour," &c.

These barbarous orders seem to have been executed with a rigorous and unfeeling exactness, as appears from a series of letters from Lord Hertford, in the same collection, giving a full account of all his operations in Scotland. They contain several curious particulars, not mentioned by the writers of that age, and with which both the historians of the city of Edinburgh were unacquainted: but they are of too great length to be inserted here.

[1] Rymer, xv. p. 22.

BOOK II. preferring their duty to their country before their affection to him, refused to concur in any design to favour the public enemy. After a few feeble and unsuccessful attempts to disturb the Regent's administration, he was obliged to fly for safety to the court of England, where Henry rewarded services which he had the inclination but not the power to perform, by giving him in marriage his niece the Lady Margaret Douglas. This unhappy exile, however, was destined to be the father of a race of Kings. He saw his son Lord Darnly mount the throne of Scotland, to the perpetual exclusion of that rival who now triumphed in his ruin. From that time his posterity have held the sceptre in two kingdoms, by one of which he was cast out as a criminal, and by the other received as a fugitive.

A peace concluded.

Meanwhile hostilities were continued by both nations, but with little vigour on either side. The historians of that age relate minutely the circumstances of several skirmishes and inroads, which, as they did not produce any considerable effect, at this distance of time deserve no remembrance[m]. At last an end was put to this languid and inactive war, by a peace, in which England, France, and Scotland were comprehended. Henry laboured to

[m] Though this war was distinguished by no important or decisive action, it was, however, extremely ruinous to individuals. There still remain two original papers, which give us some idea of the miseries to which some of the most fertile counties in the kingdom were exposed by the sudden and destructive incursions of the borderers. The first seems to be the report made to Henry by the English wardens of the marches for the year 1544, and contains their exploits from the 2d of July to the 17th of November. The account it gives of the different inroads, or *forrays*

exclude the Scots from the benefit of this treaty, and to reserve them for that vengeance which his attention to the affairs of the continent had hitherto delayed. But although a peace with England was of the last consequence to Francis I., whom the Emperor was preparing so attack with all his forces, he was too generous to abandon allies who had served

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as they are called, is very minute; and in conclusion, the sum total of mischief they did is thus computed:

Towns, towers, stedes, barnekyns, parish-churches, bastel-houses, cast down or burnt -	192
Scots slain - - - -	403
Prisoners taken - - - -	816
Nolt, i. e. horned cattle, taken - -	10,386
Sheep - - - - -	12,492
Nags and geldings - - -	1,296
Goats - - - - -	200
Bolls of corn - - - -	850

Insight gear, i. e. household furniture, not reckoned.

Haynes's State Papers, 43.

The other contains an account of an inroad by the Earl of Hertford, between the 8th and 23d of September, 1545: the narrative is more general, but it appears that he had burnt, rased, and destroyed, in the counties of Berwick and Roxburgh only,

Monasteries and Friar-houses - -	7
Castles, towers, and piles - -	16
Market towns - - -	5
Villages - - - -	243
Milns - - - -	13
Hospitals - - - -	3

All these were cast down or burnt. Haynes, 52. As the Scots were no less skilful in the practice of irregular war, we may conclude that the damage which they did in England was not inconsiderable; and that their *raids* were no less wasteful than the *forrays* of the English.

BOOK II.

him with fidelity, and he chose rather to purchase Henry's friendship with disadvantage to himself, than to leave them exposed to danger. By yielding some things to the interest, and more to the vanity of that haughty Prince; by submission, flattery, and address, he at length prevailed to have the Scots included in the peace agreed upon.

The murder of Beatoun.

An event which happened a short time before the conclusion of this peace, rendered it more acceptable to the whole nation. Cardinal Beatoun had not used his power with moderation equal to the prudence by which he attained it. Notwithstanding his great abilities, he had too many of the passions and prejudices of an angry leader of a faction, to govern a divided people with temper. His resentment against one party of the nobility, his insolence towards the rest, his severity to the Reformers, and, above all, the barbarous and illegal execution of the famous George Wishart, a man of honourable birth and of primitive sanctity, wore out the patience of a fierce age; and nothing but a bold hand was wanting to gratify the public wish by his destruction. Private revenge, inflamed and sanctified by a false zeal for religion, quickly supplied this want. Norman Lesly, the eldest son of the Earl of Rothes, had been treated by the Cardinal with injustice and contempt. It was not the temper of the man, or the spirit of the times, quietly to digest an affront. As the profession of his adversary screened him from the effects of what is called an honourable resentment, he resolved to take that satisfaction which he could not demand. This resolution deserves as much censure, as the singular courage and conduct with

which he put it in execution excite wonder. The Cardinal at that time resided in the castle of St. Andrew's, which he had fortified at great expense, and, in the opinion of the age, had rendered it impregnable. His retinue was numerous, the town at his devotion, and the neighbouring country full of his dependents. In this situation, sixteen persons undertook to surprise his castle, and to assassinate himself; and their success was equal to the boldness of the attempt. Early in the morning they seized on the gate of the castle, which was set open to the workmen who were employed in finishing the fortifications; and having placed sentries at the door of the Cardinal's apartment, they awakened his numerous domestics one by one; and turning them out of the castle, they without noise or tumult, or violence to any other person, delivered their country, though by a most unjustifiable action, from an ambitious man, whose pride was insupportable to the nobles, as his cruelty and cunning were great checks to the Reformation.

May 20. 1546.

The Regent attempts in vain to seize the murderers.

His death was fatal to the Catholic religion, and to the French interest in Scotland. The same zeal for both continued among a great party in the nation, but, when deprived of the genius and authority of so skilful a leader, operated with less effect. Nothing can equal the consternation which a blow so unexpected occasioned among such as were attached to him; while the Regent secretly enjoyed an event which removed out of his way a rival, who had not only eclipsed his greatness but almost extinguished his power. Decency, however, the honour of the church, the importunity of the Queen

BOOK II. Dowager and her adherents, his engagements with France, and, above all these, the desire of recovering his eldest son, whom the Cardinal had detained for some time at St. Andrew's in pledge of his fidelity, and who, together with the castle, had fallen into the hands of the conspirators, induced him to take arms in order to revenge the death of a man whom he hated.

He threatened vengeance, but was unable to execute it. One part of military science, the art of attacking fortified places, was then imperfectly understood in Scotland. The weapons, the discipline, and impetuosity of the Scots, rendered their armies as unfit for sieges as they were active in the field. An hundred and fifty men, which was the greatest number the conspirators ever assembled, resisted all the efforts of the Regent for five months[n], in a place which a single battalion, with a few battering cannon, would now reduce in a few hours. This tedious siege was concluded by a truce. The Regent undertook to procure for the conspirators an absolution from the Pope, and a pardon in parliament; and upon obtaining these, they engaged to surrender the castle, and to set his son at liberty.

It is probable, that neither of them was sincere in this treaty. On both sides they sought only to amuse, and to gain time. The Regent had applied to France for assistance, and expected soon to have the conspirators at mercy. On the other hand, if Lesly and his associates were not at first

[n] Epist. Reg. Scot. 2. 379.

incited by Henry to murder the Cardinal, they were, in the sequel, powerfully supported by him. Notwithstanding the silence of contemporary historians, there are violent presumptions of the former; of the latter there is undoubted certainty[o]. During the siege, the conspirators had received from England supplies both of money and provisions; and as Henry was preparing to renew his proposals concerning the marriage and the union he had projected, and to second his negotiations with a numerous army, they hoped, by concurring with him, to be in a situation in which they would no longer need a pardon, but might claim a reward[p].

[o] Keith, 60.

[p] In the first edition of this work, I expressed my suspicion of a correspondence between the murderers of Cardinal Beatoun and Henry VIII., prior to their committing that crime. In the papers of Duke Hamilton is contained the clearest evidence of this, which I publish not only to establish that fact, but as an additional confirmation of the remarks which I made upon the frequency of assassination in that age, and the slight opinion which men entertained concerning it.

The Earl of Hertford to the King's Majesty, Newcastle, April 17, 1544.

Pleaseth Your Highness to understand, that this day arrived with me the Earl of Hertford, a Scottishman called Wishart, and brought me a letter from the Lord of Brinstone [*i.e.* Chrichton Laird of Brunstan] which I send Your Highness herewith, and, according to his request, have taken order for the repair of the said Wishart to Your Majesty by post, both for the delivery of such letters as he hath to Your Majesty from the said Brinstone, and also for the declaration of his credence, which as I perceive by him consisteth in two points, one that the Lord of Grange, late Treasurer of Scotland, the Master of Rothes, the Earl of Rothes' eldest son, and John Charteris, would attempt either to apprehend or slay the Cardinal, at some time when he shall pass

BOOK II. The death of Henry blasted all these hopes. It happened in the beginning of next year, after a reign

Jan 28. 1547.

through the Fifeland, as he doth sundry times in his way to St. Andrew's, and in case they can so apprehend him will deliver him unto Your Majesty, which attemplate, he saith, they would enterprize, if they knew Your Majesty's pleasure therein, and what supportation and maintenance Your Majesty would minister unto them, after the execution of the same, in case they should be pursued by any of their enemies; the other is, that in case Your Majesty would grant unto them a convenient entertainment to keep 1000 or 1500 men in wages for a month or two, they journeying with the power of the Earl Marshal, the said Mr of Rothes, the Laird of Calder, and the other the Lord friends, will take upon them, at such time as Your Majesty's army shall be in Scotland, to destroy the abbey and town of Arbroath, being the Cardinal's, and all the other Bishops houses and countries on that side of the water thereabout, and to apprehend all those which they say be the principal impugnators of amity between England and Scotland; for which they should have a good opportunity, as they say, when the power of the said Bishops and Abbots shall resort towards Edinburgh to resist Your Majesty's army. And for the execution of these things, the said Wishart saith, that the Earl Marshal aforenamed and others will capitulate with Your Majesty in writing under their hands and seals, afore they shall desire any supply or aid of money at Your Majesty's hands. This is the effect of his credence, with sundry other advertisements of the great division that is at this present within the realm of Scotland, which we doubt not he will declare unto Your Majesty at good length. Hamilton MSS. vol. iii. p. 38.

N. B. This is the letter of which Dr. Mackenzie, vol. iii. p. 18. and Bishop Keith, Hist. p. 44., published a fragment. It does not authorize us to conclude that Mr. George Wishart, known by the name of the Martyr, was the person who resorted to the Earl of Hertford. It was more probably John Wishart of Pitarrow, the chief of that name, a man of abilities, zealously attached to the reformed doctrine, and deeply engaged in all the intrigues and operations of that busy period. Keith, 96. 117. 119. 315.

of greater splendour than true glory; bustling, rather than active; oppressive in domestic government, and in foreign politics wild and irregular. But the vices of this Prince were more beneficial to mankind than the virtues of others. His rapaciousness, his profusion, and even his tyranny, by depressing the ancient nobility, and by adding new property and power to the Commons, laid or strengthened the foundations of the English liberty. His other passions contributed no less towards the downfall of popery, and the establishment of religious freedom in the nation. His resentment led him to abolish the power, and his covetousness to seize the wealth, of the church; and, by withdrawing these supports, made it easy, in the following reign, to overturn the whole fabric of superstition.

Francis I. did not long survive a Prince who had been alternately his rival and his friend; but his successor Henry II. was not neglectful of the French interest in Scotland. He sent a considerable body of men, under the command of Leon Strozzi, to the Regent's assistance. By their long experience in the Italian and German wars, the French had become as dexterous in the conduct of sieges, as the Scots were ignorant; and as the boldness and despair of the conspirators could not defend them against the superior art of these new assailants, they, after a short resistance, surrendered to Strozzi, who engaged, in the name of the King his master, for the security of their lives; and, as his prisoners, transported them into France. The castle itself, the monument of Beatoun's

Troops arrive from France.

Force the

BOOK II.

castle of St. Andrew's to surrender.

power and vanity, was demolished, in obedience to the canon law, which, with admirable policy, denounces its anathemas even against the houses in which the sacred blood of a Cardinal happens to be shed, and ordains them to be laid in ruins[q].

The archbishopric of St. Andrew's was bestowed by the Regent upon his natural brother John Hamilton, Abbot of Paisley.

New breach with England.

The delay of a few weeks would have saved the conspirators. Those ministers of Henry VIII. who had the chief direction of affairs during the minority of his son Edward VI. conducted themselves, with regard to Scotland, by the maxims of their late master, and resolved to frighten the Scots into a treaty which they had not abilities or address to bring about by any other method.

But before we proceed to relate the events which their invasion of Scotland occasioned, we shall stop to take notice of a circumstance unobserved by contemporary historians, but extremely remarkable for the discovery it makes of the sentiments and spirit which then prevailed among the Scots. The conspirators against Cardinal Beatoun found the Regent's eldest son in the castle of St. Andrew's; and as they needed the protection of the English, it was to be feared that they might endeavour to purchase it, by delivering to them this important prize. The presumptive heir to the crown in the hands of the avowed enemies of the kingdom, was a dreadful prospect. In order to avoid it, the Parliament fell upon a very extraordinary expedient. By an act

[q] Burn. Hist. Ref. 1. 338.

made on purpose, they excluded "the Regent's "eldest son from all right of succession, public or "private, so long as he should be detained a pri-"soner, and substituted in his place his other bro-"thers, according to their seniority, and in failure "of them, those who were next heirs to the Re-"gent[r]." Succession by hereditary right is an idea so obvious and so popular, that a nation seldom ventures to make a breach in it, but in cases of extreme necessity. Such a necessity did the Parliament discover in the present situation. Hatred to England, founded on the memory of past hostilities, and heightened by the smart of recent injuries, was the national passion. This dictated that uncommon statute, by which the order of lineal succession was so remarkably broken. The modern theories, which represent this right as divine and unalienable, and that ought not to be violated upon any consideration whatsoever, seem to have been then altogether unknown.

Scotland invaded by the English.

In the beginning of September, the Earl of Hertford, now Duke of Somerset, and Protector of England, entered Scotland at the head of eighteen thousand men; and, at the same time, a fleet of sixty ships appeared on the coast to second his land forces. The Scots had for some time observed this storm gathering, and were prepared for it. Their army was almost double to that of the enemy, and posted to the greatest advantage on a rising ground above Musselburgh, not far from the banks of the river Eske. Both these circumstances

[r] Epist. Reg. Scot. 2. 359.

BOOK II.

alarmed the Duke of Somerset, who saw his danger, and would willingly have extricated himself out of it, by a new overture of peace, on conditions extremely reasonable. But this moderation being imputed to fear, his proposals were rejected with the scorn which the confidence of success inspires; and if the conduct of the Regent, who commanded the Scottish army, had been, in any degree, equal to his confidence, the destruction of the English must have been inevitable. They were in a situation precisely similar to that of their countrymen under Oliver Cromwell in the following century. The Scots had chosen their ground so well, that it was impossible to force them to give battle; a few days had exhausted the forage and provision of a narrow country; the fleet could only furnish a scanty and precarious subsistence: a retreat, therefore, was necessary: but disgrace, and perhaps ruin, were the consequences of retreating.

On both these occasions, the national heat and impetuosity of the Scots saved the English, and precipitated their own country into the utmost danger. The undisciplined courage of the private men became impatient at the sight of an enemy. The General was afraid of nothing, but that the English might escape from him by flight; and, leaving his strong camp, he attacked the Duke of Somerset near Pinkey, with no better success than his rashness deserved. The Protector had drawn up his troops on a gentle eminence, and had now the advantage of ground on his side. The Scottish army consisted almost entirely of infantry, whose chief weapon was a long spear, and for that reason their files were

Battle of Pinkey.

September 10, 1547.

very deep, and their ranks close. They advanced towards the enemy in three great bodies, and, as they passed the river, were considerably exposed to the fire of the English fleet, which lay in the bay of Musselburgh, and had drawn near the shore. The English cavalry, flushed with an advantage which they had gained in a skirmish some days before, began the attack with more impetuosity than good conduct. A body so firm and compact as the Scots easily resisted the impression of cavalry, broke them, and drove them off the field. The English infantry, however, advanced; and the Scots were at once exposed to a flight of arrows, to a fire in flank from four hundred foreign fusileers, who served the enemy, and to their cannon, which were planted behind the infantry on the highest part of the eminence. The depth and closeness of their order making it impossible for the Scots to stand long in this situation, the Earl of Angus, who commanded the vanguard, endeavoured to change his ground, and to retire towards the main body. But his friends, unhappily, mistook his motion for a flight, and fell into confusion. At that very instant the broken cavalry, having rallied, returned to the charge; the foot pursued the advantage they had gained; the prospect of victory redoubled the ardour of both: and, in a moment, the rout of the Scottish army became universal and irretrievable. The encounter in the field was not long or bloody; but, in the pursuit, the English discovered all the rage and fierceness which national antipathy, kindled by long emulation, and inflamed by reciprocal injuries, is apt to inspire. The pursuit was continued for five hours, and to a great distance. All the

BOOK II.

three roads by which the Scots fled, were strewed with spears, and swords, and targets, and covered with the bodies of the slain. Above ten thousand men fell on this day, one of the most fatal Scotland had ever seen. A few were taken prisoners, and among these some persons of distinction. The Protector had it now in his power to become master of a kingdom, out of which, not many hours before, he was almost obliged to retire with infamy[s].

Their victory of little benefit to the English.

But this victory, however great, was of no real utility, for want of skill or of leisure to improve it. Every new injury rendered the Scots more averse from an union with England; and the Protector neglected the only measure which would have made it necessary for them to have given their consent to it. He amused himself in wasting the open country, and in taking or building several petty

[s] The following passage in a curious and rare journal of the Protector's expedition into Scotland, written by W. Patten, who was joined in commission with Cecil, as judge martial of the army, and printed in 1548, deserves our notice; as it gives a just idea of the military discipline of the Scots at that time. "But what after I learned, specially touching their order, their armour, and their manner as well of going to offend, as of standing to defend, I have thought necessary here to utter. Hackbutters have they few or none, and appoint their fight most commonly always a-foot. They come to the field well furnished all with jack and skull, dagger and buckler, and swords all broad and thin, of exceeding good temper, and universally so made to slice, that as I never saw none so good, so I think it hard to devise the better. Hereto every man his pike, and a great kercher wrapped twice or thrice about his neck, not for cold, but for cutting. In their array towards joining with the enemy, they cling and thrust so near in the fore rank, shoulder and shoulder together, with their pikes in both their hands straight

castles; whereas, by fortifying a few places which were accessible by sea, he would have laid the kingdom open to the English, and in a short time the Scots must either have accepted of his terms, or have submitted to his power. By such an improvement of it, the victory at Dunbar gave Cromwell the command of Scotland. The battle of Pinkey had no other effect but to precipitate the Scots into new engagements with France. The situation of the English court may, indeed, be pleaded in excuse for the Duke of Somerset's conduct. That cabal of his enemies, which occasioned his tragical end, was already formed; and while he triumphed in Scotland, they secretly undermined his power and credit at home. Self-preservation, therefore, obliged him to prefer his safety before his fame, and to return without

afore them, and their followers in that order so hard at their backs, laying their pikes over their foregoers shoulders, that, if they do assail undiscovered, no force can well withstand them. Standing at defence they thrust shoulders likewise so nigh together, the fore ranks well nigh to kneeling, stoop low before, their fellows behind holding their pikes with both hands, and therewith in their left their bucklers, the one end of their pike against their right foot, and the other against the enemy breast-high; their followers crossing their pike points with them forward; and thus each with other so nigh as space and place will suffer, through the whole ward, so thick, that as easily shall a bare finger pierce through the skin of an angry hedge-hog, as any encounter the front of their pikes." Other curious particulars are found in this journal, from which Sir John Hayward has borrowed his account of this expedition. Life of Edward VI. 279, &c.

The length of the Scotch pike or spear was appointed by Act 44. P. 1471, to be six ells; i. e. eighteen feet six inches.

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reaping the fruits of his victory. At this time, however, the cloud blew over; the conspiracy by which he fell was not yet ripe for execution; and his presence suspended its effects for some time. The supreme power still remaining in his hands, he employed it to recover the opportunity which he had lost. A body of troops, by his command, seized and fortified Haddingtoun, a place which, on account of its distance from the sea, and from any English garrison, could not be defended without great expense and danger.

April 1548.

Forces the Scots into a closer union with France,

Meanwhile the French gained more by the defeat of their allies, than the English by their victory. After the death of Cardinal Beatoun, Mary of Guise, the Queen Dowager, took a considerable share in the direction of affairs. She was warmly attached by blood, and by inclination, to the French interest; and, in order to promote it, improved with great dexterity every event which occurred. The spirit and strength of the Scots were broken at Pinkey; and in an assembly of nobles which met at Stirling to consult upon the situation of the kingdom, all eyes were turned towards France, no prospect of safety appearing but in assistance from that quarter. But Henry II. being then at peace with England, the Queen represented that they could not expect him to take part in their quarrel, but upon views of personal advantage; and that without extraordinary concessions in his favour, no assistance, in proportion to their present exigencies, could be obtained. The prejudices of the nation powerfully seconded these representations of the Queen. What often happens to individuals, took place among the

nobles in this convention; they were swayed entirely by their passions; and in order to gratify them, they deserted their former principles, and disregarded their true interest. In the violence of resentment, they forgot that zeal for the independence of Scotland, which had prompted them to reject the proposals of Henry VIII.; and, by offering, voluntarily, their young Queen in marriage to the Dauphin, eldest son of Henry II.; and, which was still more, by proposing to send her immediately into France to be educated at his court, they granted, from a thirst of vengeance, what formerly they would not yield upon any consideration of their own safety. To gain at once such a kingdom as Scotland, was a matter of no small consequence to France. Henry, without hesitation, accepted the offers of the Scottish ambassadors, and prepared for the vigorous defence of his new acquisition. Six thousand veteran soldiers, under the command of Monsieur Dessé, assisted by some of the best officers who were formed in the long wars of Francis I., arrived at Leith. They served two campaigns in Scotland, with a spirit equal to their former fame. But their exploits were not considerable. The Scots, soon becoming jealous of their designs, neglected to support them with proper vigour. The caution of the English, in acting wholly upon the defensive, prevented the French from attempting any enterprise of consequence; and obliged them to exhaust their strength in tedious sieges, undertaken under many disadvantages. Their efforts, however, were not without some benefit to the Scots, by compelling the English to

and to offer their Queen in marriage to the Dauphin.

BOOK II. evacuate Haddingtoun, and to surrender several small forts which they possessed in different parts of the kingdom.

But the effects of these operations of his troops were still of greater importance to the French King. The diversion which they occasioned enabled him to wrest Boulogne out of the hands of the English; and the influence of his army in Scotland obtained the concurrence of parliament with the overtures which had been made to him, by the assembly of nobles at Stirling, concerning the Queen's marriage with the Dauphin, and her education in the court of France. In vain did a few patriots remonstrate against such extravagant concessions, by which Scotland was reduced to be a province of France; and Henry, from an ally, raised to be master of the kingdom; by which the friendship of France became more fatal than the enmity of England; and every thing was fondly given up to the one, that had been bravely defended against the other. A point of so much consequence was hastily decided in a parliament assembled in the camp before Haddingtoun: the intrigues of the Queen Dowager, the zeal of the clergy, and resentment against England, had prepared a great party in the nation for such a step; the French general and ambassador, by their liberality and promises, gained over many more. The Regent himself was weak enough to stoop to the offer of a pension from France, together with the title of Duke of Chatelherault in that kingdom. A considerable majority declared for the treaty, and the interest of a faction was preferred before the honour of the nation.

The treaty for that purpose concluded.

June 5. 1548.

Mary sent to be educated in France.

Having hurried the Scots into this rash and fatal resolution, the source of many calamities to themselves and to their sovereign, the French allowed them no time for reflection or repentance. The fleet which had brought over their forces was still in Scotland, and without delay convoyed the Queen into France. Mary was then six years old, and by her education in that court, one of the politest but most corrupted in Europe, she acquired every accomplishment that could add to her charms as a woman, and contracted many of those prejudices which occasioned her misfortunes as a Queen.

From the time that Mary was put into their hands, it was the interest of the French to suffer war in Scotland to languish. The recovery of the Boulonnois was the object which the French King had most at heart; but a slight diversion in Britain was sufficient to divide the attention and strength of the English, whose domestic factions deprived both their arms and councils of their accustomed vigour. The government of England had undergone a great revolution. The Duke of Somerset's power had been acquired with too much violence, and was exercised with too little moderation, to be of long continuance. Many good qualities, added to great love of his country, could not atone for his ambition in usurping the sole direction of affairs. Some of the most eminent courtiers combined against him; and the Earl of Warwick their leader, no less ambitious but more artful than Somerset, conducted his measures with so much dexterity as to raise himself upon the ruins of his rival. Without the invidious name of Protector, he succeeded to all the power and

BOOK II. influence of which Somerset was deprived, and he quickly found peace to be necessary for the establishment of his new authority, and the execution of the vast designs he had conceived.

Peace concluded.

Henry was no stranger to Warwick's situation, and improved his knowledge of it to good purpose, in conducting the negotiations for a general peace. He prescribed what terms he pleased to the English minister, who scrupled at nothing, however advantageous to that monarch and his allies. England consented to restore Boulogne and its dependencies to France, and gave up all pretensions to a treaty of marriage with the Queen of Scots, or to the conquest of her country. A few small forts, of which the English troops had hitherto kept possession, were rased; and peace between the two kingdoms was established on its ancient foundation.

March 24. 1550.

Both the British nations lost power, as well as reputation, by this unhappy quarrel. It was on both sides a war of emulation and resentment, rather than of interest; and was carried on under the influence of national animosities, which were blind to all advantages. The French, who entered into it with greater coolness, conducted it with more skill; and by dexterously availing themselves of every circumstance which occurred, recovered possession of an important territory which they had lost, and added to their monarchy a new kingdom. The ambition of the English minister betrayed to them the former; the inconsiderate rage of the Scots against their ancient enemies bestowed on them the latter; their own address and good policy merited both.

Immediately after the conclusion of the peace, the

The Scots become jealous of the French.

French forces left Scotland, as much to their own satisfaction, as to that of the nation. The Scots soon found, that the calling to their assistance a people more powerful than themselves was a dangerous expedient. They beheld, with the utmost impatience, those who had come over to protect the kingdom, taking upon them to command in it; and on many occasions they repented the rash invitation which they had given. The peculiar genius of the French nation heightened this disgust, and prepared the Scots to throw off the yoke, before they had well begun to feel it. The French were in that age, what they are in the present, one of the most polished nations in Europe. But it is to observed, in all their expeditions into foreign countries, whether towards the south or north, that their manners have been remarkably incompatible with the manners of every other people. Barbarians are tenacious of their own customs, because they want knowledge and taste to discover the reasonableness and propriety of customs which differ from them. Nations which hold the first rank in politeness are frequently no less tenacious out of pride. The Greeks were so in the ancient world; and the French are the same in the modern. Full of themselves; flattered by the imitation of their neighbours; and accustomed to consider their own modes as the standards of elegance; they scorn to disguise, or to lay aside, the distinguishing manners of their own nation, or to make any allowance for what may differ from them among others. For this reason, the behaviour of their armies has, on every occasion, been insupportable to strangers, and has always exposed them to

BOOK II.

hatred, and often to destruction. In that age, they over-ran Italy four several times by their valour, and lost it as often by their insolence. The Scots, naturally an irascible and high-spirited people, and who, of all nations, can least bear the most distant insinuation of contempt, were not of a temper to admit all the pretensions of such assuming guests. The symptoms of alienation were soon visible; they seconded the military operations of the French troops with the utmost coldness; their disgust grew insensibly to a degree of indignation that could hardly be restrained; and, on occasion of a very slight accident, broke out with fatal violence. A private French soldier engaging in an idle quarrel with a citizen of Edinburgh, both nations took arms with equal rage, in defence of their countrymen. The Provost of Edinburgh, his son, and several citizens of distinction, were killed in the fray; and the French were obliged to avoid the fury of the inhabitants by retiring out of the city. Notwithstanding the ancient alliance of France and Scotland, and the long intercourse of good offices between the two nations, an aversion for the French took its rise at this time among the Scots, the effects whereof were deeply felt, and operated powerfully through the subsequent period.

Progress of the Reformation.

From the death of Cardinal Beatoun, nothing has been said of the state of religion. While the war with England continued, the clergy had no leisure to molest the Protestants; and they were not yet considerable enough to expect any thing more than connivance and impunity. The new doctrines were still in their infancy; but during this short interval

of tranquillity they acquired strength, and advanced by large and firm steps towards a full establishment in the kingdom. The first preachers against Popery in Scotland, of whom several had appeared during the reign of James V., were more eminent for zeal and piety, than for learning. Their acquaintance with the principles of the Reformation was partial, and at second hand; some of them had been educated in England; all of them had borrowed their notions from the books published there; and in the first dawn of the new light, they did not venture far before their leaders. But in a short time the doctrines and writings of the foreign reformers became generally known; the inquisitive genius of the age pressed forward in quest of truth; the discovery of one error opened the way to others; the downfall of one impostor drew many after it; the whole fabric, which ignorance and superstition had erected in times of darkness, began to totter; and nothing was wanting to complete its ruin, but a daring and active leader to direct the attack. Such was the famous John Knox, who, with better qualifications of learning, and more extensive views, than any of his predecessors in Scotland, possessed a natural intrepidity of mind, which set him above fear. He began his public ministry at St. Andrew's in the year one thousand five hundred and forty-seven, with that success which always accompanies a bold and popular eloquence. Instead of amusing himself with lopping the branches, he struck directly at the root of Popery, and attacked both the doctrine and discipline of the established church

BOOK II. with a vehemence peculiar to himself, but admirably suited to the temper and wishes of the age.

An adversary so formidable as Knox would not have easily escaped the rage of the clergy, who observed the tendency and progress of his opinions with the utmost concern. But, at first, he retired for safety into the castle of St. Andrew's, and, while the conspirators kept possession of it, preached publicly under their protection. The great revolution in England, which followed upon the death of Henry VIII., contributed no less than the zeal of Knox towards demolishing the Popish church in Scotland. Henry had loosened the chains, and lightened the yoke of Popery. The ministers of his son Edward VI. cast them off altogether, and established the Protestant religion upon almost the same footing whereon it now stands in that kingdom. The influence of this example reached Scotland, and the happy effects of ecclesiastical liberty in one nation, inspired the other with an equal desire of recovering it. The reformers had, hitherto, been obliged to conduct themselves with the utmost caution, and seldom ventured to preach, but in private houses, and at a distance from court; they gained credit, as happens on the first publication of every new religion, chiefly among persons in the lower and middle rank of life. But several noblemen, of the greatest distinction, having, about this time, openly espoused their principles, they were no longer under the necessity of acting with the same reserve; and, with more security and encouragement, they had likewise greater success. The means of ac-

quiring and spreading knowledge became more common, and the spirit of innovation, peculiar to that period, grew every day bolder and more universal.

Happily for the Reformation, this spirit was still under some restraint. It had not yet attained firmness and vigour sufficient to overturn a system founded on the deepest policy, and supported by the most formidable power. Under the present circumstances, any attempt towards action must have been fatal to the Protestant doctrines; and it is no small proof of the authority as well as penetration of the heads of the party, that they were able to restrain the zeal of a fiery and impetuous people, until that critical and mature juncture when every step they took was decisive and successful.

Meanwhile their cause received reinforcement from two different quarters whence they never could have expected it. The ambition of the house of Guise, and the bigotry of Mary of England, hastened the subversion of the Papal throne in Scotland; and, by a singular disposition of Providence, the persons who opposed the Reformation in every other part of Europe with the fiercest zeal, were made instruments for advancing it in that kingdom.

The Queen Dowager aspires to the office of Regent.

Mary of Guise possessed the same bold and aspiring spirit which distinguished her family. But in her it was softened by the female character, and accompanied with great temper and address. Her brothers, in order to attain the high objects at which they aimed, ventured upon such daring measures as suited their great courage. Her designs upon the supreme power were concealed with the

BOOK II. utmost care, and advanced by address and refinements more natural to her sex. By a dexterous application of those talents, she had acquired a considerable influence on the councils of a nation hitherto unacquainted with the government of women; and, without the smallest right to any share in the administration of affairs, had engrossed the chief direction of them into her own hands. But she did not long rest satisfied with the enjoyment of this precarious power, which the fickleness of the Regent, or the ambition of those who governed him, might so easily disturb; and she began to set on foot new intrigues, with a design of undermining him, and of opening to herself a way to succeed him in that high dignity. Her brothers entered warmly into this scheme, and supported it with all their credit at the court of France. The French King willingly concurred in a measure, by which he hoped to bring Scotland entirely under management, and, in any future broil with England, to turn its whole force against that kingdom.

In order to arrive at the desired elevation, the Queen Dowager had only one of two ways to choose; either violently to wrest the power out of the hands of the Regent, or to obtain it by his consent. Under a minority, and among a warlike and factious people, the former was a very uncertain and dangerous experiment. The latter appeared to be no less impracticable. To persuade a man voluntarily to abdicate the supreme power; to descend to a level with those above whom he was raised; and to be content with the second place where he hath held a first, may well pass for a wild and chimerical project.

This, however, the Queen attempted; and the prudence of the attempt was sufficiently justified by its success.

The Regent's inconstancy and irresolution, together with the calamities which had befallen the kingdom under his administration, raised the prejudices both of the nobles and of the people against him, to a great height; and the Queen secretly fomented these with much industry. All who wished for a change met with a gracious reception in her court, and their spirit of disaffection was nourished by such hopes and promises, as in every age impose on the credulity of the factious. The favourers of the Reformation being the most numerous and spreading body of the Regent's enemies, she applied to them with a particular attention; and the gentleness of her disposition, and seeming indifference to the religious points in dispute, made all her promises of protection and indulgence pass upon them for sincere. Finding so great a part of the nation willing to fall in with her measures, the Queen set out for France, under pretence of visiting her daughter, and took along with her those noblemen who possessed the greatest power and credit among their countrymen. Softened by the pleasures of an elegant court, flattered by the civilities of the French King, and the caresses of the house of Guise, and influenced by the seasonable distribution of a few favours, and the liberal promise of many more, they were brought to approve of all the Queen's pretensions.

Courts the reformers.

Oct. 1550.

While she advanced by these slow but sure steps, the Regent either did not foresee the danger which

BOOK II. threatened him, or neglected to provide against it. The first discovery of the train which was laid, came from two of his own confidents, Carnegie of Kinnaird, and Panter Bishop of Ross, whom the Queen had gained over to her interest, and then employed as the most proper instruments for obtaining his consent. The overture was made to him in the name of the French King, enforced by proper threatenings, in order to work upon his natural timidity, and sweetened by every promise that could reconcile him to a proposal so disagreeable. On the one hand, the confirmation of his French title, together with a considerable pension, the parliamentary acknowledgment of his right of succession to the crown, and a public ratification of his conduct during his regency, were offered him. On the other hand, the displeasure of the French King, the power and popularity of the Queen Dowager, the disaffection of the nobles, with the danger of an after-reckoning, were represented in the strongest colours.

It was not possible to agree to a proposal so extraordinary and unexpected, without some previous struggle; and, had the Archbishop of St. Andrew's been present to fortify the irresolute and passive spirit of the Regent, he, in all probability, would have rejected it with disdain. Happily for the Queen, the sagacity and ambition of that prelate could, at this time, be no obstruction to her views. He was lying at the point of death, and in his absence the influence of the Queen's agents on a flexible temper counterbalanced several of the strongest passions of the human mind, and obtained his

consent to a voluntary surrender of the supreme power.

BOOK II. Dec. 1551.

After gaining a point of such difficulty with so much ease, the Queen returned into Scotland, in full expectation of taking immediate possession of her new dignity. But by this time the Archbishop of St. Andrew's had recovered of that distemper, which the ignorance of the Scottish physicians had pronounced to be incurable. This he owed to the assistance of the famous Cardan, one of those irregular adventurers in philosophy, of whom Italy produced so many about this period. A bold genius led him to some useful discoveries, which merit the esteem of a more discerning age; a wild imagination engaged him in those chimerical sciences, which drew the admiration of his contemporaries. As a pretender to astrology and magic, he was revered and consulted by all Europe; as a proficient in natural philosophy, he was but little known. The Archbishop, it is probable, considered him as a powerful magician, when he applied to him for relief; but it was his knowledge as a philosopher, which enabled him to cure his disease[t].

Together with his health, the Archbishop recovered the entire government of the Regent, and quickly persuaded him to recall that dishonourable promise, which he had been seduced by the artifices

[t] Cardan himself was more desirous of being considered as an astrologer than a philosopher; in his book *De Genituris*, we find a calculation of the Archbishop's nativity, from which he pretends both to have predicted his disease, and to have effected his cure. He received from the Archbishop a reward of 1800 crowns! a great sum in that age. *De Vita sua*, p. 32.

BOOK II. of the Queen to grant. However great her surprise and indignation were, at this fresh instance of his inconstancy, she was obliged to dissemble, that she might have leisure to renew her intrigues with all parties; with the Protestants, whom she favoured and courted more than ever; with the nobles, to whom she rendered herself agreeable by various arts; and with the Regent himself, in order to gain whom, she employed every argument. But, whatever impressions her emissaries might have made on the Regent, it was no easy matter to overreach or to intimidate the Archbishop. Under his management, the negotiations were spun out to a great length, and his brother maintained his station with that address and firmness which its importance so well merited. The universal defection of the nobility, the growing power of the Protestants, who all adhered to the Queen Dowager, the reiterated solicitations of the French King, and, above all, the interposition of the young Queen, who was now entering the twelfth year of her age, and claimed a right of nominating whom she pleased to be Regent[u], obliged him at last to resign that high office, which he had held many years. He obtained, however, the same advantageous terms for himself, which had been formerly stipulated.

Prevails on the Regent to resign his office.

She obtains the regency.

It was in the parliament which met on the tenth of April one thousand five hundred and fifty-four, that the Earl of Arran executed this extraordinary resignation; and at the same time Mary of Guise was raised to that dignity, which had been so long

[u] Lesley, de Reb. Gest. Scot. ap. Jebb. 1. 187.

the object of her wishes. Thus, with their own approbation, a woman and a stranger was advanced to the supreme authority over a fierce and turbulent people, who seldom submitted, without reluctance, to the legal and ancient government of their native monarchs.

Reformation continues to make great progress. July 6. 1553.

While the Queen Dowager of Scotland contributed so much towards the progress of the Reformation by the protection which she afforded it, from motives of ambition, the English Queen, by her indiscreet zeal, filled the kingdom with persons active in promoting the same cause. Mary ascended the throne of England on the death of her brother Edward, and soon after married Philip II. of Spain. To the persecuting spirit of the Romish superstition, and the fierceness of that age, she added the private resentment of her own and of her mother's sufferings, with which she loaded the reformed religion; and the peevishness and severity of her natural temper carried the acrimony of all these passions to the utmost extreme. The cruelty of her persecution equalled the deeds of those tyrants who have been the greatest reproach to human nature. The bigotry of her clergy could scarce keep pace with the impetuosity of her zeal. Even the unrelenting Philip was obliged, on some occasions, to mitigate the rigour of her proceedings. Many among the most eminent Reformers suffered for the doctrines which they had taught; others fled from the storm. To the greater part of these, Switzerland and Germany opened a secure asylum; and not a few, out of choice or necessity, fled into Scotland. What they had seen and felt in England, did not abate the

BOOK II. warmth and zeal of their indignation against Popery. Their attacks were bolder and more successful than ever; and their doctrines made a rapid progress among all ranks of men.

These doctrines, calculated to rectify the opinions and to reform the manners of mankind, had hitherto produced no other effects; but they soon began to operate with greater violence, and proved the occasion, not only of subverting the established religion, but of shaking the throne and endangering the kingdom. The causes which facilitated the introduction of these new opinions into Scotland, and which disseminated them so fast through the nation, merit, on that account, a particular and careful inquiry. The Reformation is one of the greatest events in the history of mankind, and, in whatever point of light we view it, is instructive and interesting.

A view of the political causes which contributed towards that.

The revival of learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries roused the world from that lethargy in which it had been sunk for many ages. The human mind felt its own strength, broke the fetters of authority by which it had been so long restrained, and, venturing to move in a larger sphere, pushed its inquiries into every subject, with great boldness and surprising success.

No sooner did mankind recover the capacity of exercising their reason, than religion was one of the first objects which drew their attention. Long before Luther published his famous Theses, which shook the Papal throne, science and philosophy had laid open to many of the Italians, the imposture and absurdity of the established superstition. That subtle

and refined people, satisfied with enjoying those discoveries in secret, were little disposed to assume the dangerous character of Reformers, and concluded the knowledge of truth to be the prerogative of the wise, while vulgar minds must be overawed and governed by popular errors. But, animated with a more noble and disinterested zeal, the German theologian boldly erected the standard of truth, and upheld it with an unconquerable intrepidity, which merits the admiration and gratitude of all succeeding ages.

The occasion of Luther's being first disgusted with the tenets of the Romish church, and how, from a small rupture, the quarrel widened into an irreparable breach, is known to every one who has been the least conversant in history. From the heart of Germany his opinions spread, with astonishing rapidity, all over Europe; and, wherever they came, endangered or overturned the ancient but ill founded system. The vigilance and address of the court of Rome, co-operating with the power and bigotry of the Austrian family, suppressed these notions on their first appearance in the southern kingdoms of Europe. But the fierce spirit of the north, irritated by multiplied impositions, could neither be mollified by the same arts, nor subdued by the same force; and, encouraged by some Princes from piety, and by others out of avarice, it easily bore down the feeble opposition of an illiterate and immoral clergy.

The superstition of Popery seems to have grown to the most extravagant height in those countries which are situated towards the different extremities

BOOK II. of Europe. The vigour of imagination, and sensibility of frame, peculiar to the inhabitants of southern climates, rendered them susceptible of the deepest impressions of superstitious terror and credulity. Ignorance and barbarity were no less favourable to the progress of the same spirit among the northern nations. They knew little, and were disposed to believe every thing. The most glaring absurdities did not shock their gross understandings, and the most improbable fictions were received with implicit assent and admiration.

Accordingly, that form of Popery which prevailed in Scotland was of the most bigoted and illiberal kind. Those doctrines which are most apt to shock the human understanding, and those legends which furthest exceed belief, were proposed to the people without any attempt to palliate or disguise them; nor did they ever call in question the reasonableness of the one, or the truth of the other.

The power and wealth of the church kept pace with the progress of superstition; for it is the nature of that spirit to observe no bounds in its respect and liberality towards those whose character it esteems sacred. The Scottish Kings early demonstrated how much they were under its influence, by their vast additions to the immunities and riches of the clergy. The profuse piety of David I., who acquired on that account the name of Saint, transferred almost the whole crown lands, which were at that time of great extent, into the hands of ecclesiastics. The example of that virtuous Prince was imitated by his successors. The spirit spread among all orders of men, who daily loaded the priesthood

with new possessions. The riches of the church all over Europe were exorbitant; but Scotland was one of those countries wherein they had furthest exceeded the just proportion. The Scottish clergy paid one-half of every tax imposed on land; and as there is no reason to think that in that age they would be loaded with any unequal share of the burden, we may conclude that, by the time of the Reformation, little less than one-half of the national property had fallen into the hands of a society, which is always acquiring, and can never lose.

The nature, too, of a considerable part of their property extended the influence of the clergy. Many estates throughout the kingdom, held of the church; church lands were let in lease at an easy rent, and were possessed by the younger sons and descendants of the best families[x]. The connexion between *superior* and *vassal*, between landlord and tenant, created dependencies, and gave rise to an union of great advantage to the church; and, in estimating the influence of the Popish ecclesiastics over the nation, these, as well as the real amount of their revenues, must be attended to, and taken into the account.

This extraordinary share in the national property was accompanied with proportionable weight in the supreme council of the kingdom. At a time when the number of the temporal peers was extremely small, and when the lesser barons and representatives of boroughs seldom attended parliaments, the ecclesiastics formed a considerable body there. It appears from the ancient rolls of

[x] Keith, 521. Not. (*b*).

BOOK II. parliament, and from the manner of choosing the lords of articles, that the proceedings of that high court must have been, in a great measure, under their direction[y].

The reverence due to their sacred character, which was often carried incredibly far, contributed not a little towards the growth of their power. The dignity, the titles, and precedence of the Popish clergy are remarkable, both as causes and effects of that dominion which they had acquired over the rest of mankind. They were regarded by the credulous laity as beings of a superior species; they were neither subject to the same laws, nor tried by the same judges[z]. Every guard that religion could supply, was placed around their power, their possessions, and their persons; and endeavours were used, not without success, to represent them all as equally sacred.

The reputation for learning, which, however inconsiderable, was wholly engrossed by the clergy, added to the reverence which they derived from religion. The principles of sound philosophy, and of a just taste, were altogether unknown; in place

[y] Spots. Hist. of the Church of Scotland, 449.

[z] How far this claim of the clergy to exemption from lay jurisdiction extended, appears from a remarkable transaction in the Parliament held in 1546. When that court was proceeding to the forfeiture of the murderers of Cardinal Beatoun, and were about to include a priest, who was one of the assassins, in the general sentence of condemnation, odious as the crime was to ecclesiastics, a delegate appeared in name of the clerical courts, and *repledged* or claimed exemption of him from the judgment of parliament, *as a spiritual man*. This claim was sustained; and his name is not inserted in the act of forfeiture. Epist. Reg. Scot. ii. 350. 361.

of these were substituted studies barbarous and uninstructive: but as the ecclesiastics alone were conversant in them, this procured them esteem; and a very slender portion of knowledge drew the admiration of rude ages, which knew little. War was the sole profession of the nobles, and hunting their chief amusement; they divided their time between these: unacquainted with the arts, and unimproved by science, they disdained any employment foreign from military affairs, or which required rather penetration and address, than bodily vigour. Wherever the former were necessary, the clergy were intrusted; because they alone were properly qualified for the trust. Almost all the high offices in civil government devolved, on this account, into their hands. The Lord Chancellor was the first subject in the kingdom, both in dignity and in power. From the earliest ages of the monarchy to the death of Cardinal Beatoun, fifty-four persons had held that high office; and of these forty-three had been ecclesiastics[a]. The lords of session were supreme judges in all matters of civil right; and, by its original constitution, the president and one half of the senators in this court were churchmen.

To all this we may add, that the clergy being separated from the rest of mankind by the law of celibacy, and undistracted by those cares, and unincumbered with those burdens, which occupy and oppress other men, the interest of their order became

[a] Crawf. Offic. of State.

BOOK II. their only object, and they were at full leisure to pursue it.

The nature of their functions gave them access to all persons, and at all seasons. They could employ all the motives of fear and of hope, of terror and of consolation, which operate most powerfully on the human mind. They haunted the weak and the credulous; they besieged the beds of the sick and of the dying; they suffered few to go out of the world without leaving marks of their liberality to the church, and taught them to compound with the Almighty for their sins, by bestowing riches upon those who called themselves his servants.

When their own industry, or the superstition of mankind, failed of producing this effect, the ecclesiastics had influence enough to call in the aid of law. When a person died *intestate*, the disposal of his effects was vested in the bishop of the diocese, after paying his funeral charges and debts, and distributing among his kindred the sums to which they were respectively entitled; it being presumed that no Christian would have chosen to leave the world without destining some part of his substance to pious uses[b]. As men are apt to trust to the continuance of life with a fond confidence, and childishly shun every thing that forces them to think of their mortality, many die without settling their affairs by will; and the right of administration in that event, acquired by the clergy, must have proved a considerable source both of wealth and of power to the church.

[b] Essays on Brit. Antiq. 174. Annals of Scotland, by Sir David Dalrymple, vol. i. Append. No. ii.

At the same time, no matrimonial or testamentary cause could be tried but in the spiritual courts, and by laws which the clergy themselves had framed. The penalty, too, by which the decisions of these courts were enforced, added to their authority. A sentence of excommunication was no less formidable than a sentence of outlawry. It was pronounced on many occasions, and against various crimes: and, besides excluding those, upon whom it fell, from Christian privileges, it deprived them of all their rights as men, or as citizens; and the aid of the secular power concurred with the superstition of mankind, in rendering the thunders of the church no less destructive than terrible.

To these general causes may be attributed the immense growth both of the wealth and power of the Popish church; and, without entering into any more minute detail, this may serve to discover the foundations on which a structure so stupendous was erected.

But though the laity had contributed, by their own superstition and profuseness, to raise the clergy from poverty and obscurity to riches and eminence, they began, by degrees, to feel and to murmur at their encroachments. No wonder haughty and martial barons should view the power and possessions of the church with envy; and regard the lazy and inactive character of churchmen with the utmost contempt; while, at the same time, the indecent and licentious lives of the clergy gave great and just offence to the people, and considerably abated the veneration which they were accustomed to yield to that order of men.

Immense wealth, extreme indolence, gross igno-

BOOK II. rance, and, above all, the severe injunction of celibacy, had concurred to introduce this corruption of morals among many of the clergy, who, presuming too much upon the submission of the people, were at no pains either to conceal or to disguise their own vices. According to the accounts of the Reformers, confirmed by several Popish writers, the most open and scandalous dissoluteness of manners prevailed among the Scottish clergy[c]. Cardinal Beatoun, with the same public pomp which is due to a legitimate child, celebrated the marriage of his natural daughter with the Earl of Crawford's son[d]; and, if we may believe Knox, he publicly continued to the end of his days a criminal correspondence with her mother, who was a woman of rank. The other prelates seem not to have been more regular and exemplary than their primate[e].

Men of such characters ought, in reason, to have been alarmed at the first clamours raised against

[c] Winzet. ap. Keith, Append. 202. 205. Lesley de Reb. Gest. Scot. 232.

[d] The marriage articles, subscribed with his own hand, in which he calls her *my daughter*, are still extant. Keith, p. 42.

[e] A remarkable proof of the dissolute manners of the clergy is found in the public records. A greater number of letters of *legitimation* was granted during the first thirty years after the Reformation, than during the whole period that has elapsed since that time. These were obtained by the sons of the Popish clergy. The ecclesiastics, who were allowed to retain their benefices, alienated them to their children; who, when they acquired wealth, were desirous that the stain of illegitimacy might no longer remain upon their families. In Keith's *Catalogue of the Scottish Bishops*, we find several instances of such alienations of church lands, by the Popish incumbents to their natural children.

their own morals, and the doctrines of the church, by the Protestant preachers; but the Popish ecclesiastics, either out of pride or ignorance, neglected the proper methods for silencing them. Instead of reforming their lives, or disguising their vices, they affected to despise the censures of the people. While the Reformers, by their mortifications and austerities, endeavoured to resemble the first propagators of Christianity, the Popish clergy were compared to all those persons who are most infamous in history for the enormity and scandal of their crimes.

On the other hand, instead of mitigating the rigour, or colouring over the absurdity, of the established doctrines; instead of attempting to found them upon Scripture, or to reconcile them to reason; they left them without any other support or recommendation than the authority of the church, and the decrees of councils. The fables concerning purgatory, the virtues of pilgrimage, and the merits of the saints, were the topics on which they insisted in their discourses to the people; and the duty of preaching being left wholly to monks of the lowest and most illiterate orders, their compositions were still more wretched and contemptible than the subjects on which they insisted. While the Reformers were attended by crowded and admiring audiences, the Popish preachers were either universally deserted, or listened to with scorn.

The only device which they employed in order to recover their declining reputation, or to confirm the wavering faith of the people, was equally imprudent and unsuccessful. As many doctrines of their

BOOK II. church had derived their credit at first from the authority of false miracles, they now endeavoured to call in these to their aid[f]. But such lying wonders, as were beheld with unsuspicious admiration, or heard with implicit faith, in times of darkness and of ignorance, met with a very different reception in a more enlightened period. The vigilance of the Reformers detected these impostures, and exposed not only them, but the cause which needed the aid of such artifices, to ridicule.

As the Popish ecclesiastics became more and more the objects of hatred and of contempt, the discourses of the Reformers were listened to as so many calls to liberty; and, besides the pious indignation which they excited against those corrupt doctrines which had perverted the nature of true Christianity; besides the zeal which they inspired for the knowledge of truth and the purity of religion; they gave rise also, among the Scottish nobles, to other views and passions. They hoped to shake off the yoke of ecclesiastical dominion, which they had long felt to be oppressive, and which they now discovered to be unchristian. They expected to recover possession of the church revenues, which they were now taught to consider as alienations made by their ancestors with a profusion no less undiscerning than unbounded. They flattered themselves, that a check would be given to the pride and luxury of the clergy, who would be obliged, henceforward, to confine themselves within the sphere peculiar to their sacred character. An aversion from the established church,

[f] Spotswood, 69.

which flowed from so many concurring causes, which was raised by considerations of religion, heightened by motives of policy and instigated by prospects of private advantage, spread fast through the nation, and excited a spirit that burst out, at last, with irresistible violence.

Religious considerations alone were sufficient to have roused this spirit. The points in controversy with the church of Rome were of so much importance to the happiness of mankind, and so essential to Christianity, that they merited all the zeal with which the Reformers contended in order to establish them. But the Reformation having been represented as the effect of some wild and enthusiastic phrensy in the human mind, this attempt to account for the eagerness and zeal with which our ancestors embraced and propagated the Protestant doctrines, by taking a view of the political motives alone which influenced them, and by showing how naturally these prompted them to act with so much ardour, will not, perhaps, be deemed an unnecessary digression. We now return to the course of the history.

1554. The Queen Regent begins her administration with some unpopular measures.

The Queen's elevation to the office of Regent seems to have transported her, at first, beyond the known prudence and moderation of her character. She began her administration by conferring upon foreigners several offices of trust and of dignity; a step which, both from the inability of strangers to discharge these offices with propriety, and from the envy which their preferment excites among the natives, is never attended with good consequences. Vilmort was made comptroller, and intrusted with

BOOK II. 1554.

the management of the public revenues; Bonot was appointed Governor of Orkney; and Rubay honoured with the custody of the great seal, and the title of Vice-chancellor[g]. It was with the highest indignation that the Scots beheld offices of the greatest eminence and authority dealt out among strangers[h]. By these promotions they conceived the Queen to have offered an insult both to their understandings and to their courage; to the former, by supposing them unfit for those stations which their ancestors had filled with so much dignity; to the latter, by imagining that they were tame enough not to complain of an affront, which, in no former age, would have been tolerated with impunity.

While their minds were in this disposition, an incident happened which inflamed their aversion from French councils to the highest degree. Ever since the famous contest between the houses of Valois and Plantagenet, the French had been accustomed to embarrass the English, and to divide their strength by the sudden and formidable incursions of their allies, the Scots. But, as these inroads were seldom attended with any real advantage to Scotland, and exposed it to the dangerous resentment of a powerful neighbour, the Scots began to grow less tractable than formerly, and scrupled any longer to serve an ambitious ally at the price of their own quiet and security. The change, too, which was daily introducing in the art of war, rendered the assistance of

[g] Lesley de Reb. Gest. Scot. 189.

[h] The resentment of the nation against the French rose to such an height, that an act of parliament was passed on purpose to restrain or moderate it. Parl. 6. Q. Mary, c. 60.

the Scottish forces of less importance to the French Monarch. For these reasons, Henry having resolved upon a war with Philip II., and foreseeing that the Queen of England would take part in her husband's quarrel, was extremely solicitous to secure in Scotland the assistance of some troops, which would be more at his command than an undisciplined army led by chieftains who were almost independent. In prosecution of this design, but under pretence of relieving the nobles from the expense and danger of defending the borders, the Queen Regent proposed in parliament, to register the value of lands throughout the kingdom, to impose on them a small tax, and to apply that revenue towards maintaining a body of regular troops in constant pay. A fixed tax upon land, which the growing expense of government hath introduced into almost every part of Europe, was unknown at that time, and seemed altogether inconsistent with the genius of feudal policy. Nothing could be more shocking to a generous and brave nobility, than the intrusting to mercenary hands the defence of those territories which had been acquired, or preserved, by the blood of their ancestors. They received this proposal with the utmost dissatisfaction. About three hundred of the lesser barons repaired in a body to the Queen Regent, and represented their sense of the intended innovation, with that manly and determined boldness which is natural to a free people in a martial age. Alarmed at a remonstrance delivered in so firm a tone, and supported by such formidable numbers, the Queen prudently abandoned a scheme which she found to be univer-

1554.

1555.

BOOK II. 1555.

sally odious. As the Queen herself was known perfectly to understand the circumstances and temper of the nation, this measure was imputed wholly to the suggestions of her foreign counsellors; and the Scots were ready to proceed to the most violent extremities against them.

Attempts to engage the kingdom in a war with England.

The French, instead of extinguishing, added fuel to the flame. They had now commenced hostilities against Spain, and Philip had prevailed on the Queen of England to reinforce his army with a considerable body of her troops. In order to deprive him of this aid, Henry had recourse, as he projected, to the Scots; and attempted to excite them to invade England. But as Scotland had nothing to dread from a Princess of Mary's character, who, far from any ambitious scheme of disturbing her neighbours, was wholly occupied in endeavouring to reclaim her heretical subjects; the nobles, who were assembled by the Queen Regent at Newbattle, listened to the solicitations of the French monarch with extreme coldness, and prudently declined engaging the kingdom in an enterprise so dangerous and unnecessary. What she could not obtain by persuasion, the Queen Regent brought about by a stratagem. Notwithstanding the peace which subsisted between the two kingdoms, she commanded her French soldiers to rebuild a small fort near Berwick, which was appointed, by the last treaty, to be rased. The garrison of Berwick sallied out, interrupted the work, and ravaged the adjacent country. This insult roused the fiery spirit of the Scots, and their promptness to revenge the least appearance of national injury, dissipated, in a moment, the wise

and pacific resolutions which they had so lately formed. War was determined, and orders instantly given for raising a numerous army. But before their forces could assemble, the ardour of their indignation had time to cool; and the English having discovered no intention to push the war with vigour, the nobles resumed their pacific system, and resolved to stand altogether upon the defensive. They marched to the banks of the Tweed, they prevented the incursions of the enemy; and having done what they thought sufficient for the safety and honour of their country, the Queen could not induce them, either by her entreaties or her artifices, to advance another step.

BOOK II. 1555. 1556.

While the Scots persisted in their inactivity, D'Oysel, the commander of the French troops, who possessed entirely the confidence of the Queen Regent, endeavoured, with her connivance, to engage the two nations in hostilities. Contrary to the orders of the Scottish general, he marched over the Tweed with his own soldiers, and invested Werk Castle, a garrison of the English. The Scots, instead of seconding his attempt, were enraged at his presumption. The Queen's partiality towards France had long been suspected; but it was now visible that she wantonly sacrificed the peace and safety of Scotland to the interest of that ambitious and assuming ally. Under the feudal governments, it was in camps that subjects were accustomed to address the boldest remonstrances to their sovereigns. While arms were in their hands, they felt their own strength; and at that time all their representations of grievances carried the authority of commands. On this occa-

BOOK II. 1556.

sion, the resentment of the nobles broke out with such violence, that the Queen, perceiving all attempts to engage them in action to be vain, abruptly dismissed her army, and retired with the utmost shame and disgust; having discovered the impotence of her own authority, without effecting any thing which could be of advantage to France[1].

It is observable, that this first instance of contempt for the Regent's authority can, in no degree, be imputed to the influence of the new opinions in religion. As the Queen's pretensions to the Regency had been principally supported by those who favoured the Reformation, and as she still needed them for a counterpoise to the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and the partisans of the house of Hamilton; she continued to treat them with great respect, and admitted them to no inconsiderable share in her favour and confidence. Kirkaldy of Grange, and the other surviving conspirators against Cardinal Beatoun were about this time recalled by her from banishment; and, through her connivance, the Protestant preachers enjoyed an interval of tranquillity, which was of great advantage to their cause. Soothed by these instances of the Queen's moderation and humanity, the Protestants left to others the office of remonstrating; and the leaders of the opposite factions set them the first example of disputing the will of their sovereign.

The Queen's marriage with the Dauphin.

As the Queen Regent felt how limited and precarious her authority was, while it depended on the poise of these contrary factions, she endeavoured to

[1] Strype's Memor. iii. Append. 274. Lesly, 196.

establish it on a broader and more secure foundation, by hastening the conclusion of her daughter's marriage with the Dauphin. Amiable as the Queen of Scots then was, in the bloom of youth, and considerable as the territories were, which she would have added to the French monarchy; reasons were not wanting to dissuade Henry from completing his first plan of marrying her to his son. The Constable Montmorency had employed all his interest to defeat an alliance which reflected so much lustre on the Princes of Lorrain. He had represented the impossibility of maintaining order and tranquillity among a turbulent people, during the absence of their sovereign; and for that reason had advised Henry to bestow the young Queen upon one of the Princes of the blood, who, by residing in Scotland, might preserve that kingdom an useful ally to France, which, by a nearer union to the crown, would become a mutinous and ungovernable province[k]. But at this time the Constable was a prisoner in the hands of the Spaniards; the Princes of Lorrain were at the height of their power; and their influence, seconded by the charms of the young Queen, triumphed over the prudent but envious remonstrances of their rival.

1556.

The French King accordingly applied to the Parliament of Scotland, which appointed eight of its members[l] to represent the whole body of the nation,

Dec. 14. 1557.

[k] Melv. Mem. 15.

[l] Viz. The Archbishop of Glasgow, the Bishop of Ross, the Bishop of Orkney, the Earls of Rothes and Cassils, Lord Fleming, Lord Seton, the Prior of St. Andrew's, and John Erskine of Dun.

BOOK II. 1557.

at the marriage of the Queen. Among the persons on whom the public choice conferred this honourable character, were some of the most avowed and zealous advocates for the Reformation; by which may be estimated the degree of respect and popularity which that party had now attained in the kingdom. The instructions of the parliament to those commissioners still remain[m], and do honour to the wisdom and integrity of that assembly. At the same time that they manifested, with respect to the articles of marriage, a laudable concern for the dignity and interest of their sovereign, they employed every precaution which prudence could dictate, for preserving the liberty and independence of the nation, and for securing the succession of the crown in the house of Hamilton.

Artifices of the French in the marriage treaty.

With regard to each of these, the Scots obtained whatever satisfaction their fear or jealousy could demand. The young Queen, the Dauphin, and the King of France, ratified every article with the most solemn oaths, and confirmed them by deeds in form under their hands and seals. But on the part of France, all this was one continued scene of studied and elaborate deceit. Previous to these public transactions with the Scottish deputies, Mary had been persuaded to subscribe privately three deeds, equally unjust and invalid; by which, failing the heirs of her own body, she conferred the kingdom of Scotland, with whatever inheritance or succession might accrue to it, in free gift upon the crown of France, declaring all promises to the contrary, which the

[m] Keith, Append. 13.

necessity of her affairs, and the solicitations of her subjects, had extorted, or might extort from her, to be void and of no obligation[n]. As it gives us a proper idea of the character of the French court under Henry II., we may observe that the King himself, the keeper of the great seals, the Duke of Guise, and the Cardinal of Lorrain, were the persons engaged in conducting this perfidious and dishonourable project. The Queen of Scots was the only innocent actor in that scene of iniquity. Her youth, her inexperience, her education in a foreign country, and her deference to the will of her uncles, must go far towards vindicating her, in the judgment of every impartial person, from any imputation of blame on that account.

This grant, by which Mary bestowed the inheritance of her kingdom upon strangers, was concealed with the utmost care from her subjects. They seem, however, not to have been unacquainted with the intention of the French to overturn the settlement of the succession in favour of the Duke of Chatelherault. The zeal with which the Archbishop of St. Andrew's opposed all the measures of the Queen Regent, evidently proceeded from the fears and suspicions of that prudent prelate on this head[o].

April 14. 1558.

The marriage, however, was celebrated with great pomp; and the French, who had hitherto affected to draw a veil over their designs upon Scotland, be-

[n] Corps Diplomat. tom. v. 21. Keith, 73.

[o] About this time the French seem to have had some design of reviving the Earl of Lennox's pretensions to the succession, in order to intimidate and alarm the Duke of Chatelherault. Haynes, 215. 219 Forbes's Collect. vol. i. 189.

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gan now to unfold their intentions without any disguise. In the treaty of marriage, the deputies had agreed that the Dauphin should assume the name of King of Scotland. This they considered only as an honorary title; but the French laboured to annex to it some solid privileges and power. They insisted that the Dauphin's title should be publicly recognised; that the *Crown Matrimonial* should be conferred upon him; and that all the rights pertaining to the husband of a Queen should be vested in his person. By the laws of Scotland, a person who married an heiress, kept possession of her estate during his own life, if he happened to survive her and the children born of the marriage[p]. This was called the *courtesy of Scotland.* The French aimed at applying this rule, which takes place in private inheritances, to the succession of the kingdom; and that seems to be implied in their demand of the *Crown Matrimonial,* a phrase peculiar to the Scottish historians, and which they have neglected to explain[q]. As the French had reason to expect difficulties in carrying through this measure, they began with sounding the deputies who were then at Paris. The English, in the marriage-articles between their

[p] Reg. Mag. lib. ii. 58.

[q] As far as I can judge, the husband of the Queen, by the grant of the *Crown Matrimonial,* acquired a right to assume the title of King, to have his name stamped upon the current coin, and to sign all public instruments together with the Queen. In consequence of this, the subjects took an oath of fidelity to him. Keith, Append. 20. His authority became, in some measure, co-ordinate with that of the Queen; and without his concurrence, manifested by signing his name, no public deed seems to have been considered as valid. By the oath of fidelity of the Scottish

Queen and Philip of Spain, had set an example to the age, of that prudent jealousy and reserve with which a foreigner should be admitted so near the throne. Full of the same ideas, the Scottish deputies had, in their oath of allegiance to the Dauphin, expressed themselves with remarkable caution[r]. Their answer was in the same spirit, respectful, but firm; and discovered a fixed resolution of consenting to nothing that tended to introduce any alteration in the order of succession to the crown.

Four of the deputies[s] happening to die before they returned into Scotland, this accident was universally imputed to the effects of poison, which was supposed to have been given them by the emissaries of the House of Guise. The historians of all nations discover an amazing credulity with respect to rumours of this kind, which are so well calculated to please the malignity of some men, and to gratify the love of the marvellous which is natural to all, that in every age they have been swallowed without examination, and believed contrary to reason. No wonder the Scots should easily give credit to a suspicion, which received such strong colours of probability, both from their own resentment, and

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commissioners to the Dauphin, it is evident that, in their opinion, the rights belonging to the *Crown Matrimonial* subsisted only during the continuance of the marriage. Keith, Append. 20. But the conspirators against Rizio bound themselves to procure a grant of the *Crown Matrimonial* to Darnly, during all the days of his life. Keith, Append. 120. Good. i. 227.

[r] Keith, Append. 20.

[s] The Bishop of Orkney, the Earl of Rothes, the Earl of Cassils, and Lord Fleming.

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from the known character of the Princes of Lorrain, so little scrupulous about the justice of the ends which they pursued, or of the means which they employed. For the honour of human nature, however, it must be observed, that as we can discover no motive which could induce any man to perpetrate such a crime, so there appears no evidence to prove that it was committed. But the Scots of that age, influenced by national animosities and prejudices, were incapable of examining the circumstances of the case with calmness, or of judging concerning them with candour. All parties agreed in believing the French to have been guilty of this detestable action; and it is obvious how much this tended to increase the aversion for them, which was growing among all ranks of men.

The Regent prevails on the Parliament to grant it. Nov. 29.

Notwithstanding the cold reception which their proposal concerning the *Crown Matrimonial* met with from the Scottish deputies, the French ventured to move it in parliament. The partisans of the house of Hamilton, suspicious of their designs upon the succession, opposed it with great zeal. But a party, which the feeble and unsteady conduct of their leader had brought under much disreputation, was little able to withstand the influence of France, and the address of the Queen Regent, seconded, on this occasion, by all the numerous adherents of the Reformation. Besides, that artful Princess dressed out the French demands in a less offensive garb, and threw in so many limitations as seemed to render them of small consequence. These either deceived the Scots, or removed their scruples; and in compliance to the Queen they passed an act,

conferring the *Crown Matrimonial* on the Dauphin; and with the fondest credulity trusted to the frail security of words and statutes, against the dangerous encroachments of power[t]. BOOK II. 1558.

Continues to court the Protestants.

The concurrence of the Protestants with the Queen Regent, in promoting a measure so acceptable to France, while the Popish clergy, under the influence of the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, opposed it with so much violence[u], is one of those singular circumstances in the conduct of parties, for which this period is so remarkable. It may be ascribed, in some degree, to the dexterous management of the Queen, but chiefly to the moderation of those who favoured the Reformation. The Protestants were by this time almost equal to the Catholics, both in power and in number; and, conscious of their own strength, they submitted with impatience to that tyrannical authority with which the ancient laws armed the ecclesiastics against them. They longed to be exempted from this oppressive jurisdiction, and publicly to enjoy the liberty of professing those opinions, and of exercising that worship, which so great a part of the nation deemed to be founded in truth and to be acceptable to the Deity. This indulgence, to which the whole weight of

[t] The act of parliament is worded with the utmost care, with a view to guard against any breach of the order of succession. But the Duke, not relying on this alone, entered a solemn protestation to secure his own right. Keith, 76. It is plain that he suspected the French of having some intention to set aside his right of succession; and, indeed, if they had no design of that kind, the eagerness with which they urged their demand was childish.

[u] Melv. 47.

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priestly authority was opposed, there were only two ways of obtaining. Either violence must extort it from the reluctant hand of their sovereign, or by prudent compliances they might expect it from her favour or her gratitude. The former is an expedient for the redress of grievances, to which no nation has recourse suddenly; and subjects seldom venture upon resistance, which is their last remedy, but in cases of extreme necessity. On this occasion the Reformers wisely held the opposite course, and by their zeal in forwarding the Queen's designs they hoped to merit her protection. This disposition the Queen encouraged to the utmost, and amused them so artfully with many promises, and some concessions, that, by their assistance, she surmounted in parliament the force of a national and laudable jealousy, which would otherwise have swayed with the greater number.

Another circumstance contributed somewhat to acquire the Regent such considerable influence in this parliament. In Scotland, all the bishoprics, and those abbeys which conferred a title to a seat in parliament, were in the gift of the crown[x]. From the time of her accession to the regency, the Queen had kept in her own hands almost all those which became vacant, except such as were, to the great disgust of the nation, bestowed upon foreigners. Among these, her brother the Cardinal of Lorrain had obtained the abbeys of Kelso and Melross, two of the most wealthy foundations in the kingdom[y]. By this conduct, she thinned the ecclesiastical

[x] See Book I.

[y] Lesly, 202.

bench[z], which was entirely under the influence of the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and which, by its numbers and authority, usually had great weight in the house, so as to render any opposition it could give at that time of little consequence.

The Earl of Argyll, and James Stewart Prior of St. Andrew's, one the most powerful, and the other the most popular leader of the Protestants, were appointed to carry the crown and other ensigns of royalty to the Dauphin. But from this they were diverted by the part they were called to act in a more interesting scene, which now begins to open.

Elizabeth succeeds to the crown of England.

Before we turn towards this, it is necessary to observe, that on the seventeenth of November, one thousand five hundred and fifty-eight, Mary of England finished her short and inglorious reign. Her sister Elizabeth took possession of the throne without opposition; and the Protestant religion was once more established by law in England. The accession of a Queen, who, under very difficult circumstances, had given strong indications of those eminent qualities, which, in the sequel, rendered her reign so illustrious, attracted the eyes of all Europe. Among the Scots, both parties observed her first motions with the utmost solicitude, as they easily foresaw that she would not remain long an indifferent spectator of their transactions.

Under many discouragements and much oppression, the Reformation advanced towards a full esta-

[z] It appears from the rolls of this parliament, which Lesly calls a very full one, that only seven bishops and sixteen abbots were present.

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blishment in Scotland. All the low country, the most populous, and at that time the most warlike part of the kingdom, was deeply tinctured with the Protestant opinions; and if the same impressions were not made in the more distant counties, it was owing to no want of the same dispositions among the people, but to the scarcity of preachers, whose most indefatigable zeal could not satisfy the avidity of those who desired their instructions. Among a people bred to arms, and as prompt as the Scots to act with violence; and in an age when religious passions had taken such strong possession of the human mind, and moved and agitated it with so much violence, the peaceable and regular demeanour of so numerous a party is astonishing. From the death of Mr. Patrick Hamilton, the first who suffered in Scotland for the Protestant religion, thirty years had elapsed, and during so long a period no violation of public order or tranquillity had proceeded from that sect[a]; and though roused and irritated by the most cruel excesses of ecclesiastical tyranny, they did in no instance transgress those bounds of duty which the law prescribes to subjects. Besides the prudence of their own leaders, and the protection which the Queen Regent, from political motives, afforded them, the moderation of the Archbishop of St. Andrew's encouraged this pacific disposition. That prelate, whose private life cotempo-

[a] The murder of Cardinal Beatoun was occassioned by private revenge; and being contrived and executed by sixteen persons only, cannot with justice be imputed to the whole Protestant party.

rary writers tax with great irregularities[b], governed the church, for some years, with a temper and prudence of which there are few examples in that age. But some time before the meeting of the last parliament, the Archbishop departed from those humane maxims by which he had hitherto regulated his conduct; and, whether in spite to the Queen, who had entered into so close an union with the Protestants, or in compliance with the importunities of his clergy, he let loose all the rage of persecution against the reformed; sentenced to the flames an aged priest, who had been convicted of embracing the Protestant opinions; and summoned several others, suspected of the same crime, to appear before a synod of the clergy, which was soon to convene at Edinburgh.

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Nothing could equal the horror of the Protestants at this unexpected and barbarous execution, but the zeal with which they espoused the defence of a cause that now seemed devoted to destruction. They had immediate recourse to the Queen Regent; and as her success in the parliament, which was then about to meet, depended on their concurrence, she not only sheltered them from the impending storm, but permitted them the exercise of their religion with more freedom than they had hitherto enjoyed. Unsatisfied with this precarious tenure by which they held their religious liberty, the Protestants laboured to render their possession of it more secure and independent. With this view, they determined to petition the Parliament

[b] Knox, Buchanan, Keith, 208.

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for some legal protection against the exorbitant and oppressive jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, which, by their arbitrary method of proceeding, founded in the canon law, were led to sentences the most shocking to humanity, by maxims the most repugnant to justice. But the Queen, who dreaded the effect of a debate on this delicate subject, which could not fail of exciting high and dangerous passions, prevailed on the leaders of the party, by new and more solemn promises of her protection, to desist from any application to parliament, where their numbers and influence would, in all probability, have procured them, if not entire redress, at least some mitigation, of their grievances.

They applied to another assembly, to a convocation of the Popish clergy, but with the same ill success which hath always attended every proposal for reformation addressed to that order of men. To abandon usurped power, to renounce lucrative error, are sacrifices which the virtue of individuals has, on some occasions, offered to truth; but from any society of men no such effort can be expected. The corruptions of a society recommended by common utility, and justified by universal practice, are viewed by its members without shame or horror; and reformation never proceeds from themselves, but is always forced upon them by some foreign hand. Suitable to this unfeeling and inflexible spirit was the behaviour of the convocation in the present conjuncture. All the demands of the Protestants were rejected with contempt; and the Popish clergy, far from endeavour-

ing, by any prudent concessions, to sooth and to reconcile such a numerous body, asserted the doctrines of their church, concerning some of the most exceptionable articles, with an ill-timed rigour, which gave new offence[c]. 1558.

During the sitting of the convocation, the Protestants first began to suspect some change in the Regent's disposition towards them. Though joined with them for many years by interest, and united, as they conceived, by the strongest ties of affection and of gratitude, she discovered, on this occasion, evident symptoms, not only of coldness, but of a growing disgust and aversion. In order to account for this, our historians do little more than produce the trite observations concerning the influence of prosperity to alter the character and to corrupt the heart. The Queen, say they, having reached the utmost point to which her ambition aspired, no longer preserved her accustomed moderation, but, with an insolence usual to the fortunate, looked down upon those by whose assistance she had been enabled to rise so high. But it is neither in the depravity of the human heart, nor in the ingratitude of the Queen's disposition, that we must search for the motives of her present conduct. These were derived from another, and a more remote source, which, in order to clear the subsequent transactions, we shall endeavour to open with some care. 1559.

Ambitious views of the Princes of Lorrain.

The ambition of the Princes of Lorrain had been no less successful than daring; but all their schemes

[c] Keith, 81.

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were distinguished by being vast and unbounded. Though strangers at the court of France, their eminent qualities had raised them, in a short time, to an height of power superior to that of all other subjects, and had placed them on a level even with the Princes of the blood themselves. The church, the army, the revenue, were under their direction. Nothing but the royal dignity remained unattained, and they were elevated to a near alliance with it, by the marriage of the Queen of Scots to the Dauphin. In order to gratify their own vanity, and to render their niece more worthy the heir of France, they set on foot her claim to the crown of England, which was founded on pretences not unplausible.

The tragical amours and marriages of Henry VIII. are known to all the world. Moved by the caprices of his love, or of his resentment, that impatient and arbitrary monarch had divorced or beheaded four of the six Queens whom he married. In order to gratify him, both his daughters had been declared illegitimate by act of parliament; and yet, with that fantastic inconsistence which distinguishes his character, he, in his last will, whereby he was empowered to settle the order of succession, called both of them to the throne upon the death of their brother Edward; and, at the same time, passing by the posterity of his eldest sister Margaret Queen of Scotland, he appointed the line of succession to continue in the descendants of his younger sister, the Duchess of Suffolk.

In consequence of this destination, the validity whereof was admitted by the English, but never

recognised by foreigners, Mary had reigned in England without the least complaint of neighbouring Princes. But the same causes which facilitated her accession to the throne, were obstacles to the elevation of her sister Elizabeth, and rendered her possession of it precarious and insecure. Rome trembled for the Catholic faith under a Protestant Queen of such eminent abilities. The same superstitious fears alarmed the court of Spain. France beheld with concern a throne, to which the Queen of Scots could form so many pretensions, occupied by a rival, whose birth, in the opinion of all good Catholics, excluded her from any legal right of succession. The impotent hatred of the Roman Pontiff, or the slow councils of Philip II., would have produced no sudden or formidable effect. The ardent and impetuous ambition of the Princes of Lorrain, who at that time governed the court of France, was more decisive, and more to be dreaded. Instigated by them, Henry, soon after the death of Mary, persuaded his daughter-in-law and her husband to assume the title of King and Queen of England. They affected to publish this to all Europe. They used that style and appellation in public papers, some of which still remain[d]. The arms of England were engraved on their coin and plate, and borne by them on all occasions. No preparations, however, were made to support this impolitic and premature claim. Elizabeth was already seated on her throne; she possessed all the intrepidity of spirit, and all the arts of policy, which

They persuade Mary to assume the title of Queen of England.

[d] Anders. Diplom. Scot. Nos 68. and 164.

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were necessary for maintaining that station. England was growing into reputation for naval power. The marine of France had been utterly neglected; and Scotland remained the only avenue by which the territories of Elizabeth could be approached.

Resolve to invade England.

It was on that side, therefore, that the Princes of Lorrain determined to make their attack[e]; and, by using the name and pretensions of the Scottish Queen, they hoped to rouse the English Catholics, formidable at that time by their zeal and numbers, and exasperated to the utmost against Elizabeth on account of the change which she had made in the national religion.

In order to this, necessary to check the Reformation in Scotland.

It was in vain to expect the assistance of the Scottish Protestants to dethrone a Queen, whom all Europe began to consider the most powerful guardian and defender of the reformed faith. To break the power and reputation of that party in Scotland became, for this reason, a necessary step towards the invasion of England. With this the Princes of Lorrain resolved to open their scheme. And as persecution was the only method for suppressing religious opinions known in that age, or dictated by the despotic and sanguinary spirit of the Romish superstition, this, in its utmost violence, they determined to employ. The Earl of Argyll, the Prior of St. Andrew's, and other leaders of the party, were marked out by them for immediate destruction[f]; and they hoped, by punishing them, to intimidate their followers. Instructions for this purpose were sent from France to the

[e] Forbes's Collect. i. 253. 269. 279. 404.

[f] Ibid. i. 152.

Queen Regent. That humane and sagacious Princess condemned a measure which was equally violent and impolitic. By long residence in Scotland, she had become acquainted with the eager and impatient temper of the nation; she well knew the power, the number, and popularity of the Protestant leaders; and had been a witness to the intrepid and unconquerable resolution which religious fervour could inspire. What then could be gained by rousing this dangerous spirit, which hitherto all the arts of policy had scarcely been able to restrain? If it once broke loose, the authority of a Regent would be little capable to subdue, or even to moderate, its rage. If, in order to quell it, foreign forces were called in, this would give the alarm to the whole nation, irritated already at the excessive power which the French possessed in the kingdom, and suspicious of all their designs. Amidst the shock which this might occasion, far from hoping to exterminate the Protestant doctrine, it would be well if the whole fabric of the established church were not shaken, and perhaps overturned from the foundation. These prudent remonstrances made no impression on her brothers; precipitant, but inflexible in all their resolutions, they insisted on the full and rigorous execution of their plan. Mary, passionately devoted to the interest of France, and ready, on all occasions, to sacrifice her own opinions to the inclinations of her brothers, prepared to execute their commands with implicit submission[s]; and, contrary to her own judgment,

[s] Melv. 48. Mem. de Castelnau, ap. Jebb, vol. ii. 446.

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and to all the rules of sound policy, she became the instrument of exciting civil commotions in Scotland, the fatal termination of which she foresaw and dreaded.

The Regent alters her conduct with regard to the Protestants.

From the time of the Queen's competition for the regency with the Duke of Chatelherault, the Popish clergy, under the direction of the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, had set themselves in opposition to all her measures. Her first step towards the execution of her new scheme, was to regain their favour. Nor was this reconcilement a matter of difficulty. The Popish ecclesiastics, separated from the rest of mankind by the law of celibacy, one of the boldest and most successful efforts of human policy: and combined among themselves in the closest and most sacred union, have been accustomed, in every age, to sacrifice all private and particular passions to the dignity and interest of their order. Delighted on this occasion with the prospect of triumphing over a faction, the encroachments of which they had long dreaded, and animated with the hopes of re-establishing their declining grandeur on a firmer basis, they at once cancelled the memory of past injuries, and engaged to second the Queen in all her attempts to check the progress of the Reformation. The Queen, being secure of their assistance, openly approved of the decrees of the convocation, by which the principles of the Reformers were condemned; and at the same time she issued a proclamation, enjoining all persons to observe the approaching festival of Easter according to the Romish ritual.

As it was no longer possible to mistake the

Queen's intentions, the Protestants, who saw the danger approach, in order to avert it, employed the Earl of Glencairn, and Sir Hugh Campbell of London, to expostulate with her concerning this change towards severity, which their former services had so little merited, and which her reiterated promises gave them no reason to expect. She, without disguise or apology, avowed to them her resolution of extirpating the reformed religion out of the kingdom. And, upon their urging her former engagements with an uncourtly but honest boldness, she so far forgot her usual moderation, as to utter a sentiment, which, however apt those of royal condition may be to entertain it, prudence should teach them to conceal as much as possible. "The promises of Princes," says she, "ought not to be too carefully remembered, nor the performance of them exacted, unless it suits their own conveniency."

Summons their preachers to appear before her.

The indignation which betrayed the Queen into this rash expression, was nothing in comparison of that with which she was animated, upon hearing that the public exercise of the reformed religion had been introduced into the town of Perth. At once she threw off the mask, and issued a mandate, summoning all the Protestant preachers in the kingdom to a court of justice, which was to be held at Stirling on the tenth of May. The Protestants, who, from their union, began, about this time, to be distinguished by the name of the CONGREGATION, were alarmed, but not intimidated, by this danger; and instantly resolved not to abandon the men to whom they were indebted for the most valuable of all blessings, the knowledge of truth. At that time there pre-

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vailed in Scotland, with respect to criminal trials, a custom, introduced at first by the institutions of vassalage and clanship, and tolerated afterwards under a feeble government: persons accused of any crime were accompanied to the place of trial by a retinue of their friends and adherents, assembled for that purpose from every quarter of the kingdom. Authorized by this ancient practice, the reformed convened in great numbers to attend their pastors to Stirling. The Queen dreaded their approach with a train so numerous, though unarmed; and in order to prevent them from advancing, she empowered John Erskine of Dun, a person of eminent authority with the party, to promise in her name, that she would put a stop to the intended trial, on condition the preachers and their retinue advanced no nearer to Stirling. Erskine, being convinced himself of the Queen's sincerity, served her with the utmost zeal; and the Protestants, averse from proceeding to any act of violence, listened with pleasure to so pacific a proposition. The preachers, with a few leaders of the party, remained at Perth; the multitude which had gathered from different parts of the kingdom dispersed, and retired to their own habitations.

Breaks a promise on which they had relied.

But, notwithstanding this solemn promise, the Queen, on the tenth of May, proceeded to call to trial the persons who had been summoned, and, upon their non-appearance, the rigour of justice took place, and they were pronounced outlaws. By this ignoble artifice, so incompatible with regal dignity, and so inconsistent with that integrity which should prevail in all transactions between sovereigns and their subjects, the Queen forfeited the esteem

and confidence of the whole nation. The Protestants, shocked no less at the indecency with which she violated the public faith, than at the danger which threatened themselves, prepared boldly for their own defence. Erskine, enraged at having been made the instrument for deceiving his party, instantly abandoned Stirling, and, repairing to Perth, added to the zeal of his associates, by his representations of the Queen's inflexible resolution to suppress religion[h].

This occasions an insurrection at Perth.

The popular rhetoric of Knox powerfully seconded his representations; he having been carried a prisoner into France, together with the other persons taken in the castle of St. Andrew's, soon made his escape out of that country; and residing sometimes in England, sometimes in Scotland, had at last been driven out of both kingdoms, by the rage of the Popish clergy, and was obliged to retire to Geneva. Thence he was called by the leaders of the Protestants in Scotland; and, in compliance with their solicitations, he set out for his native country, where he arrived a few days before the trial appointed at Stirling. He hurried instantly to Perth, to share with his brethren in the common danger, or to assist them in the common cause. While their minds were in that ferment, which the Queen's perfidiousness and their own danger occasioned, he mounted the pulpit, and, by a vehement harangue against idolatry, inflamed the multitude with the utmost rage. The indiscretion of a priest, who, immediately after Knox's sermon, was prepar-

[h] Keith, p. 84.

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ing to celebrate mass, and began to decorate the altar for that purpose, precipitated them into immediate action. With tumultuary but irresistible violence, they fell upon the churches in that city, overturned the altars, defaced the pictures, broke in pieces the images; and proceeding next to the monasteries, they in a few hours laid those sumptuous fabrics almost level with the ground. This riotous insurrection was not the effect of any concert, or previous deliberation: censured by the reformed preachers, and publicly condemned by persons of most power and credit with the party, it must be regarded merely as an accidental eruption of popular rage[1].

The Regent marches against them.

But to the Queen Dowager these proceedings appeared in a very different light. Besides their manifest contempt for her authority, the Protestants had violated every thing in religion which she deemed venerable or holy; and on both these accounts she determined to inflict the severest vengeance on the whole party. She had already drawn the troops in French pay to Stirling; with these, and what Scottish forces she could levy of a sudden, she marched directly to Perth, in hopes of surprising the Protestant leaders before they could assemble their followers, whom, out of confidence in her disingenuous promises, they had been rashly induced to dismiss. Intelligence of these preparations and menaces was soon conveyed to Perth. The Protestants would gladly have soothed the Queen, by addresses both to herself and to the persons of greatest

[1] Knox. Hist. 127, 128.

credit in her court; but, finding her inexorable, they, with great vigour, took measures for their own defence. Their adherents, animated with zeal for religion, and eager to expose themselves in so good a cause, flocked in such numbers to Perth, that they not only secured the town from danger, but within a few days were in a condition to take the field, and to face the Queen, who advanced with an army seven thousand strong.

Neither party, however, was impatient to engage. The Queen dreaded the event of a battle with men whom the fervour of religion raised above the sense of fear or danger. The Protestants beheld with regret the Earl of Argyll, the Prior of St. Andrew's, and some other eminent persons of their party, still adhering to the Queen; and, destitute of their aid and counsel, declined hazarding an action, the ill success of which might have proved the ruin of their cause. The prospect of an accommodation was for these reasons highly acceptable to both sides: Argyll and the Prior, who were the Queen's commissioners for conducting the negotiation, seem to have been sincerely desirous of reconciling the contending factions; and the Earl of Glencairn arriving unexpectedly with a powerful reinforcement to the Congregation, augmented the Queen's eagerness for peace. A treaty was accordingly concluded, in which it was stipulated that both armies should be disbanded, and the gates of Perth set open to the Queen; that indemnity should be granted to the inhabitants of that city, and to all others concerned in the late insurrection; that no French garrison

A treaty concluded.

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should be left in Perth, and no French soldier should approach within three miles of that place; and that a parliament should immediately be held, in order to compose whatever difference might till remain[k].

May 29.

The leaders of the Congregation, distrustful of the Queen's sincerity, and sensible that concessions, flowing not from inclination, but extorted by the necessity of her affairs, could not long remain in force, entered into a new association, by which they bound themselves, on the first infringement of the present treaty, or on the least appearance of danger to their religion, to re-assemble their followers, and to take arms in defence of what they deemed the cause of God and of their country[l].

Broken by the Regent.

The Queen, by her conduct, demonstrated these precautions to be the result of no groundless or unnecessary fear. No sooner were the Protestant forces dismissed, than she broke every article in the treaty. She introduced French troops into Perth, fined some of the inhabitants, banished others, removed the magistrates out of office; and on her retiring to Stirling, she left behind her a garrison of six hundred men, with orders to allow the exercise of no other religion than the Roman Catholic. The situation of Perth, a place at that time of some strength, and a town among the most proper of any in the kingdom for the station of a garrison, seems to have allured the Queen to this unjustifiable and ill-judged breach of public faith; which she endea-

[k] Keith, 89. [l] Knox, 238.

voured to colour by alleging that the body of men left at Perth was entirely composed of native Scots, though kept in pay by the King of France.

The Queen's scheme began gradually to unfold; it was now apparent, that not only the religion but the liberties of the kingdom were threatened; and that the French troops were to be employed as instruments for subduing the Scots, and wreathing the yoke about their necks. Martial as the genius of the Scots then was, the poverty of their country made it impossible to keep their armies long assembled; and even a very small body of regular troops might have proved formidable to the nation, though consisting wholly of soldiers. But what number of French forces were then in Scotland, at what times and under what pretext they returned, after having left the kingdom in one thousand five hundred and fifty, we cannot with any certainty determine. Contemporary historians often select with little judgment the circumstances which they transmit to posterity; and with respect to matters of the greatest curiosity and importance, leave succeeding ages altogether in the dark. We may conjecture, however, from some passages in Buchanan, that the French and Scots in French pay amounted at least to three thousand men, under the command of Monsieur D'Oysel, a creature of the House of Guise; and they were soon augmented to a much more formidable number.

The Queen, encouraged by having so considerable a body of well-disciplined troops at her command, and instigated by the violent counsels of D'Oysel, had ventured, as we have observed, to violate the

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The Protestants again take arms.

treaty of Perth, and, by that rash action, once more threw the nation into the most dangerous convulsions. The Earl of Argyll and the Prior of St. Andrew's instantly deserted a court where faith and honour seemed to them to be no longer regarded; and joined the leaders of the Congregation, who had retreated to the eastern part of Fife. The barons from the neighbouring counties repaired to them, the preachers roused the people to arms, and wherever they came, the same violent operations which accident had occasioned at Perth, were now encouraged out of policy. The enraged multitude was let loose, and churches and monasteries, the monuments of ecclesiastic pride and luxury, were sacrificed to their zeal.

In order to check their career, the Queen, without losing a moment, put her troops in motion; but the zeal of the Congregation got the start once more of her vigilance and activity. In that warlike age, when all men were accustomed to arms, and on the least prospect of danger were ready to run to them, the leaders of the Protestants found no difficulty to raise an army. Though they set out from St. Andrew's with a slender train of an hundred horse, crowds flocked to their standards from every corner of the country through which they marched; and before they reached Falkland, a village only ten miles distant, they were able to meet the Queen with superior force[m].

The Queen, surprised at the approach of so formidable a body, which was drawn up by its leaders

[m] Knox, 141.

in such a manner as added greatly in appearance to its numbers, had again recourse to negotiation. She found, however, that the preservation of the Protestant religion, their zeal for which had at first roused the leaders of the Congregation to take arms, was not the only object they had now in view. They were animated with the warmest love of civil liberty, which they conceived to be in imminent danger from the attempts of the French forces: and these two passions mingling, added reciprocally to each other's strength. Together with more enlarged notions in religion, the Reformation filled the human mind with more liberal and generous sentiments concerning civil government. The genius of Popery is extremely favourable to the power of Princes. The implicit submission to all her decrees, which is exacted by the Romish church, prepares and breaks the mind for political servitude; and the doctrines of the Reformers, by overturning the established system of superstition, weakened the firmest foundations of civil tyranny. That bold spirit of inquiry, which led men to reject theological errors, accompanied them in other sciences, and discovered every where the same manly zeal for truth. A new study, introduced at the same time, added greater force to the spirit of liberty. Men became more acquainted with the Greek and Roman authors, who described exquisite models of free government, far superior to the inaccurate and oppressive system established by the feudal law; and produced such illustrious examples of public virtue, as wonderfully suited both the circumstances and spirit of that age. Many among the most eminent Reformers were themselves con-

They aim at redressing civil as well as religious grievances.

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siderable masters in ancient learning; and all of them eagerly adopted the maxims and spirit of the ancients, with regard to government[n]. The most ardent love of liberty accompanied the Protestant religion throughout all its progress; and wherever it was embraced, it roused an independent spirit, which rendered men attentive to their privileges as subjects, and jealous of the encroachments of their sovereigns. Knox and the other preachers of the Reformation infused generous sentiments concerning government into the minds of their hearers; and the Scottish barons, naturally free and bold, were prompted to assert their rights with more freedom and boldness than ever. Instead of obeying the Queen Regent, who had enjoined them to lay down their arms, they demanded not only the redress of their religious grievances, but, as a preliminary toward settling the nation, and securing its liberties, required the immediate expulsion of the French troops out of Scotland. It was not in the Queen's power to make so important a concession without the concurrence of the French Monarch; and as some time was requisite in order to obtain that, she

[n] The excessive admiration of ancient policy was the occasion of Knox's famous book concerning the *Government of Women*, wherein, conformable to the maxims of the ancient legislators, which modern experience has proved to be ill-founded, he pronounces the elevation of women to the supreme authority, to be utterly destructive of good government. His principles, authorities, and examples, were all drawn from ancient writers. The same observation may be made with regard to Buchanan's Dialogue, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*. It is founded, not on the maxims of feudal, but of ancient republican government.

hoped, during this interval, to receive such reinforcements from France, as would insure the accomplishment of that design which she had twice attempted with unequal strength. Meanwhile, she agreed to a cessation of arms for eight days, and before the expiration of these, engaged to transport the French troops to the south side of the Forth; and to send commissioners to St. Andrew's, who should labour to bring all differences to an accommodation. As she hoped, by means of the French troops, to overawe the Protestants in the southern counties, the former article in the treaty was punctually executed; the latter, having been inserted merely to amuse the Congregation, was no longer remembered.

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A second treaty violated.

By these reiterated and wanton instances of perfidy, the Queen lost all credit with her adversaries; and no safety appearing in any other cause, they again took arms with more inflamed resentment, and with bolder and more extensive views. The removing of the French forces had laid open to them all the country situated between Forth and Tay. The inhabitants of Perth alone remaining subjected to the insolence and exactions of the garrison which the Queen had left there, implored the assistance of the Congregation for their relief. Thither they marched, and having without effect required the Queen to evacuate the town in terms of the former treaty, they prepared to besiege it in form. The Queen employed the Earl of Huntly and Lord Erskine to divert them from this enterprise. But her wonted artifices were now of no avail; repeated so often, they could deceive no longer; and, without listen-

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ing to her offers, the Protestants continued the siege, and soon obliged the garrison to capitulate.

Rapid march and success of the Protestants.

After the loss of Perth, the Queen endeavoured to seize Stirling, a place of some strength, and, from its command of the only bridge over the Forth, of great importance. But the leaders of the Congregation, having intelligence of her design, prevented the execution of it by an hasty march thither with part of their forces. The inhabitants, heartily attached to the cause, set open to them the gates of their town. Thence they advanced, with the same rapidity, towards Edinburgh, which the Queen, on their approach, abandoned with precipitation, and retired to Dunbar.

The Protestant army, wherever it came, kindled or spread the ardour of Reformation, and the utmost excesses of violence were committed upon churches and monasteries. The former were spoiled of every decoration, which was then esteemed sacred; the latter were laid in ruins. We are apt, at this distance of time, to condemn the furious zeal of the Reformers, and to regret the overthrow of so many stately fabrics, the monuments of our ancestors' magnificence, and among the noblest ornaments of the kingdom. But amidst the violence of a Reformation, carried on in opposition to legal authority, some irregularities were unavoidable; and perhaps no one could have been permitted more proper to allure and interest the multitude, or more fatal to the grandeur of the established church. How absurd soever and ill founded the speculative errors of Popery may be, some inquiry and atten-

tion are requisite towards discovering them. The abuses and corruptions which had crept into the public worship of that church, lay more open to observation, and, by striking the senses, excited more universal disgust. Under the long reign of heathenism, superstition seemed to have exhausted its talent of invention, so that when a superstitious spirit seized Christians, they were obliged to imitate the heathens in the pomp and magnificence of their ceremonies, and to borrow from them the ornaments and decorations of their temples. To the pure and simple worship of the primitive Christians, there succeeded a species of splendid idolatry, nearly resembling those Pagan originals whence it had been copied. The contrariety of such observances to the spirit of Christianity, was almost the first thing, in the Romish system, which awakened the indignation of the Reformers, who, applying to these the denunciations in the Old Testament against idolatry, imagined that they could not endeavour at suppressing them with too much zeal. No task could be more acceptable to the multitude, than to overturn those seats of superstition; they ran with emulation to perform it, and happy was the man whose hand was most adventurous and successful in executing a work deemed so pious. Nor did their leaders labour to restrain this impetuous spirit of Reformation. Irregular and violent as its sallies were, they tended directly to that end which they had in view: for, by demolishing the monasteries throughout the kingdom, and setting at liberty their wretched inhabitants, they hoped to

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render it impossible ever to rebuild the one, or to re-assemble the other.

But amidst these irregular proceedings, a circumstance which does honour to the conduct and humanity of the leaders of the Congregation deserves notice. They so far restrained the rage of their followers, and were able so to temper their heat and zeal, that few of the Roman Catholics were exposed to any personal insult, and not a single man suffered death[o].

At the same time we discover, by the facility with which these great revolutions were effected, how violently the current of national favour ran towards the Reformation. No more than three hundred men marched out of Perth, under the Earl of Argyll and Prior of St. Andrew's[p]; with this inconsiderable force they advanced. But wherever they came, the people joined them in a body; their army was seldom less numerous than five thousand men; the gates of every town were thrown open to receive them; and, without striking a single blow, they took possession of the capital of the kingdom.

June 29.

This rapid and astonishing success seems to have encouraged the Reformers to extend their views, and to rise in their demands. Not satisfied with their first claim of toleration for their religion, they now openly aimed at establishing the Protestant doctrine on the ruins of Popery. For this reason they determined to fix their residence at Edinburgh; and, by their appointment, Knox, and some other

[o] Lesley, ap. Jebb, vol. i. 231.

[p] Keith, 94.

preachers, taking possession of the pulpits, which had been abandoned by the affrightened clergy, declaimed against the errors of Popery with such fervent zeal as could not fail of gaining many proselytes.

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In the mean time, the Queen, who had prudently given way to a torrent which she could not resist, observed with pleasure that it now began to subside. The leaders of the Congregation had been above two months in arms, and by the expenses of a campaign, protracted so long beyond the usual time of service in that age, had exhausted all the money which a country where riches did not abound, had been able to supply. The multitude, dazzled with their success, and concluding the work to be already done, retired to their own habitations. A few only of the more zealous or wealthy barons remained with their preachers at Edinburgh. As intelligence is procured in civil wars with little difficulty, whatever was transacted at Edinburgh was soon known at Dunbar. The Queen, regulating her own conduct by the situation of her adversaries, artfully amused them with the prospect of an immediate accommodation; while, at the same time, she by studied delays spun out the negotiations for that purpose to such a length, that, in the end, the party dwindled to an inconsiderable number; and, as if peace had been already re-established, became careless of military discipline. The Queen, who watched for such an opportunity, advanced unexpectedly, by a sudden march in the night, with all her forces, and, appearing before Edinburgh, filled that city with the utmost consternation. The Pro-

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testants, weakened by the imprudent dispersion of their followers, durst not encounter the French troops in the open field; and were even unable to defend an ill fortified town against their assaults. Unwilling, however, to abandon the citizens to the Queen's mercy, they endeavoured, by facing the enemy's army, to gain time for collecting their own associates. But the Queen, in spite of all their resistance, would have easily forced her way into the town, if the seasonable conclusion of a truce had not procured her admission without the effusion of blood.

A third treaty.

Their dangerous situation easily induced the leaders of the Congregation to listen to any overtures of peace; and as the Queen was looking daily for the arrival of a strong reinforcement from France, and expected great advantages from a cessation of arms, she also agreed to it upon no unequal conditions. Together with a suspension of hostilities, from the twenty-fourth of July to the tenth of January, it was stipulated in this treaty, that on the one hand the Protestants should open the gates of Edinburgh next morning to the Queen Regent; remain in dutiful subjection to her government; abstain from all future violation of religious houses; and give no interruption to the established clergy; either in the discharge of their functions, or in the enjoyment of their benefices. On the other hand, the Queen agreed to give no molestation to the preachers or professors of the Protestant religion; to allow the citizens of Edinburgh, during the cessation of hostilities, to enjoy the exercise of religious worship according to the form most agreeable to the con-

science of each individual; and to permit the free and public profession of the Protestant faith in every part of the kingdom[q]. The Queen, by these liberal concessions in behalf of their religion, hoped to sooth the Protestants, and expected, from indulging their favourite passion, to render them more compliant with respect to other articles, particularly the expulsion of the French troops out of Scotland. The anxiety which the Queen expressed for retaining this body of men, rendered them more and more the objects of national jealousy and aversion. The immediate expulsion of them was therefore demanded anew, and with greater warmth; but the Queen, taking advantage of the distress of the adverse party, eluded the request, and would consent to nothing more, than that a French garrison should not be introduced into Edinburgh.

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The desperate state of their affairs imposed on the Congregation the necessity of agreeing to this article, which, however, was very far from giving them satisfaction. Whatever apprehensions the Scots had conceived, from retaining the French forces in the kingdom, were abundantly justified during the late commotions. A small body of those troops, maintained in constant pay, and rendered formidable by regular discipline, had checked the progress of a martial people, though animated with zeal both for religion and liberty. The smallest addition to their number, and a considerable one was daily expected, might prove fatal to the public liberty, and Scotland might be exposed to the danger of being

[q] Keith, 98. Maitland, Hist. of Edin. 16, 17.

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In order to provide against this imminent calamity, the Duke of Chatelherault and Earl of Huntly, immediately after concluding the truce, desired an interview with the chiefs of the Congregation. These two noblemen, the most potent at that time in Scotland, were the leaders of the party which adhered to the established church. They had followed the Queen during the late commotions; and having access to observe more narrowly the dangerous tendency of her councils, their abhorrence of the yoke which was preparing for their country surmounted all other considerations, and determined them rather to endanger the religion which they professed, than to give their aid towards the execution of her pernicious designs. They proceeded further, and promised to Argyll, Glencairn, and the Prior of St. Andrew's, who were appointed to meet them, that if the Queen should, with her usual insincerity, violate any article in the treaty of truce, or refuse to gratify the wishes of the whole nation, by dismissing her French troops, they would then instantly join with their countrymen in compelling her to a measure, which the public safety, and the preservation of their liberties, rendered necessary[r].

July 8. About this time died Henry II. of France; just when he had adopted a system with regard to the affairs of Scotland, which would, in all probability, have restored union and tranquillity to that king-

[r] Knox, 154.

dom[s]. Towards the close of his reign, the Princes of Lorrain began visibly to decline in favour, and the Constable Montmorency, by the assistance of the Duchess of Valentinois, recovered that ascendant over the spirit of his master, which his great experience, and his faithful, though often unfortunate, services seemed justly to merit. That prudent minister imputed the insurrections in Scotland wholly to the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorrain, whose violent and precipitant councils could not fail of transporting, beyond all bounds of moderation, men whose minds were possessed with that jealousy which is inseparable from the love of civil liberty, or inflamed with that ardour which accompanies religious zeal. Montmorency, in order to convince Henry that he did not load his rivals with any groundless accusation, prevailed to have Melvil[t], a Scottish gentleman of his retinue, dispatched into his native country, with instructions to observe the motions both of the Regent and of her adversaries; and the King agreed to regulate his future proceedings in that kingdom by Melvil's report.

Did history indulge herself in these speculations, it would be amusing to inquire what a different direction might have been given by this resolution to the national spirit; and to what a different issue Melvil's report, which would have set the conduct of the malecontents in the most favourable light, might have conducted the public disorders. Perhaps, by gentle treatment, and artful policy, the progress of the Reformation might have been check-

[s] Melv. 40.

[t] The author of the Memoirs.

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ed, and Scotland brought to depend upon France. Perhaps, by gaining possession of this avenue, the French might have made their way into England; and, under colour of supporting Mary's title to the crown, they might not only have defeated all Elizabeth's measures in favour of the Reformation, but have re-established the Roman Catholic religion, and destroyed the liberties of that kingdom. But into this boundless field of fancy and conjecture, the historian must make no excursions; to relate real occurrences, and to explain their real causes and effects, is his peculiar and only province.

Accession of Francis II. to the crown of France.

The tragical and untimely death of the French Monarch put an end to all moderate and pacific measures with regard to Scotland. The Duke of Guise, and the Cardinal his brother, upon the accession of Francis II., a Prince void of genius, and without experience, assumed the chief direction of French affairs. Allied so nearly to the throne, by the marriage of their niece the Queen of Scots with the young King, they now wanted but little of regal dignity, and nothing of regal power. This power did not long remain inactive in their hands. The same vast schemes of ambition, which they had planned out under the former reign, were again resumed; and they were enabled, by possessing such ample authority, to pursue them with more vigour and greater probability of success. They beheld, with infinite regret, the progress of the Protestant religion in Scotland; and, sensible what an unsurmountable obstacle it would prove to their designs, they bent all their strength to check its growth, before it rose to any greater height. For

this purpose they carried on their preparations with all possible expedition, and encouraged the Queen their sister to expect, in a short time, the arrival of an army so powerful as the zeal of their adversaries, however desperate, would not venture to oppose.

Nor were the Lords of the Congregation either ignorant of those violent counsels which prevailed in the court of France since the death of Henry, or careless of providing against the danger which threatened them from that quarter. The success of their cause, as well as their personal safety, depending entirely on the unanimity and vigour of their own resolutions, they endeavoured to guard against division, and to cement together more closely, by entering into a stricter bond of confederacy and mutual defence. Two persons concurred in this new association, who brought a great accession both of reputation and of power to the party. These were the Duke of Chatelherault, and his eldest son the Earl of Arran. This young nobleman, having resided some years in France, where he commanded the Scottish guards, had imbibed the Protestant opinions concerning religion. Hurried along by the heat of youth and the zeal of a proselyte, he had uttered sentiments with respect to the points in controversy, which did not suit the temper of a bigoted court, intent at that juncture on the extinction of the Protestant religion; in order to accomplish which, the greatest excesses of violence were committed. The church was suffered to wreak its utmost fury upon all who were suspected of heresy. Courts were erected in different

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parts of France, to take cognisance of this crime; and by their sentences several persons of distinction were condemned to the flames.

But, in order to inspire more universal terror, the Princes of Lorrain resolved to select, for a sacrifice, some persons whose fall might convince all ranks of men, that neither splendour of birth, nor eminence in station, could exempt from punishment those who should be guilty of this unpardonable transgression. The Earl of Arran was the person destined to be the unhappy victim[u]. As he was allied to one throne, and the presumptive heir to another; as he possessed the first rank in his own country, and enjoyed an honourable station in France; his condemnation could not fail of making the desired impression on the whole kingdom. But the Cardinal of Lorrain having let fall some expressions, which raised Arran's suspicions of the design, he escaped the intended blow by a timely flight. Indignation, zeal, resentment, all prompted him to seek revenge upon these persecutors of himself and of the religion which he professed; and as he passed through England, on his return to his native country, Elizabeth, by hopes and promises, inflamed those passions, and sent him back into Scotland animated with the same implacable aversion to France which possessed a great part of his countrymen. He quickly communicated these sentiments to his father the Duke of Chatelherault, who was already extremely disgusted with the measures carrying on in Scotland;

Earl of Arran joins the Protestants.

[u] Thuan. lib. xxiv. p. 462. Edit. Francof.

and as it was the fate of that nobleman to be governed in every instance by those about him, he now suffered himself to be drawn from the Queen Regent; and, having joined the Congregation, was considered, from that time, as the head of the party.

But with respect to him, this distinction was merely nominal. James Stewart, Prior of St. Andrew's, was the person who moved and actuated the whole body of the Protestants, among whom he possessed that unbounded confidence, which his strenuous adherence to their interest and his great abilities so justly merited. He was the natural son of James V., by a daughter of Lord Erskine; and as that amorous monarch had left several others a burden upon the crown, they were all destined for the church, where they could be placed in stations of dignity and affluence. In consequence of this resolution, the priory of St. Andrew's had been conferred upon James: but, during so busy a period, he soon became disgusted with the indolence and retirement of a monastic life; and his enterprising genius called him forth to act a principal part on a more public and conspicuous theatre. The scene in which he appeared required talents of different kinds: military virtue, and political discernment, were equally necessary in order to render him illustrious. These he possessed in an eminent degree. To the most unquestionable personal bravery he added great skill in the art of war, and in every enterprise his arms were crowned with success. His sagacity and penetration in civil affairs enabled him, amidst the reeling and turbulence of factions, to hold a prosperous course; while his boldness in

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defence of the Reformation, together with the decency, and even severity, of his manners, secured him the reputation of being sincerely attached to religion, without which it was impossible in that age to gain an ascendant over mankind.

It was not without reason that the Queen dreaded the enmity of a man so capable to obstruct her designs. As she could not, with all her address, make the least impression on his fidelity to his associates, she endeavoured to lessen his influence, and to scatter among them the seeds of jealousy and distrust, by insinuating that the ambition of the Prior aspired beyond the condition of a subject, and aimed at nothing less than the crown itself.

An accusation so improbable gained but little credit. Whatever thoughts of this kind the presumption of unexpected success, and his elevation to the highest dignity in the kingdom, may be alleged to have inspired at any subsequent period, it is certain that at this juncture he could form no such vast design. To dethrone a Queen, who was lineal heir to an ancient race of Monarchs; who had been guilty of no action by which she could forfeit the esteem and affection of her subjects; who could employ, in defence of her rights, the forces of a kingdom much more powerful than her own; and to substitute in her place, a person whom the illegitimacy of his birth, by the practice of all civilized nations, rendered incapable of any inheritance either public or private; was a project so chimerical as the most extravagant ambition would hardly entertain, and could never conceive to be practicable. The promise too, which the Prior made to Melvil,

of residing constantly in France, on condition the public grievances were redressed[x]; the confidence reposed in him by the Duke of Chatelherault and his son, the presumptive heirs to the crown; and the concurrence of almost all the Scottish nobles in promoting the measures by which he gave offence to the French court; go far towards his vindication from those illegal and criminal designs, with the imputation of which the Queen endeavoured at that time to load him.

Troops arrive from France, and fortify Leith.

The arrival of a thousand French soldiers compensated, in some degree, for the loss which the Queen sustained by the defection of the Duke of Chatelherault. These were immediately commanded to fortify Leith, in which place, on account of its commodious harbour, and its situation in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and in a plentiful country, the Queen resolved to fix the head-quarters of her foreign forces. This unpopular measure, by the manner of executing it, was rendered still more unpopular. In order to bring the town entirely under their command, the French turned out a great part of the ancient inhabitants, and, taking possession of the houses which they had obliged them to abandon, presented to the view of the Scots two objects equally irritating and offensive: on the one hand, a number of their countrymen expelled their habitations by violence, and wandering without any certain abode; on the other, a colony of foreigners settling with their wives and children in the heart of Scotland, growing into strength by daily reinforcements,

[x] Melvil. 54.

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and openly preparing a yoke, to which, without some timely exertion of national spirit, the whole kingdom must of necessity submit.

The Protestants remonstrate against this.

It was with deep concern that the Lords of the Congregation beheld this bold and decisive step taken by the Queen Regent; nor did they hesitate a moment, whether they should employ their whole strength, in one generous effort, to rescue their religion and liberty from impending destruction. But, in order to justify their own conduct, and to throw the blame entirely on their adversaries, they resolved to preserve the appearances of decency and respect towards their superiors, and to have no recourse to arms without the most urgent and apparent necessity. They joined, with this view, in an address to the Regent, representing, in the strongest terms, their dissatisfaction with the measures she was pursuing, and beseeching her to quiet the fears and jealousies of the nation by desisting from fortifying Leith. The Queen, conscious of her present advantageous situation, and elated with the hopes of fresh succours, was in no disposition for listening to demands utterly inconsistent with her views, and urged with that bold importunity which is so little acceptable to Princes[y].

Sept. 29.

The Regent disregards their remonstrances.

The suggestions of her French counsellors contributed, without doubt, to alienate her still further from any scheme of accommodation. As the Queen was ready on all occasions to discover an extraordinary deference for the opinions of her countrymen, her brothers, who knew her secret disappro-

[y] Haynes, 211.

bation of the violent measures they were driving on, took care to place near her such persons as betrayed her, by their insinuations, into many actions, which her own unbiassed judgement would have highly condemned. As their success in the present juncture, when all things were hastening towards a crisis, depended entirely on the Queen's firmness, the Princes of Lorrain did not trust wholly to the influence of their ordinary agents; but, in order to add the greater weight to their councils, they called in aid the ministers of religion; and, by the authority of their sacred character, they hoped effectually to recommend to their sister that system of severity which they had espoused[z]. With this view, but under pretence of confounding the Protestants by the skill of such able masters in controversy, they appointed several French divines to reside in Scotland. At the head of these, and with the character of legate from the Pope, was Pellevé Bishop of Amiens, and afterwards Archbishop and Cardinal of Sens, a furious bigot[a], servilely devoted to the house of Guise, and a proper instrument for recommending or executing the most outrageous measures.

Amidst the noise and danger of civil arms, these doctors had little opportunity to display their address in the use of their theological weapons. But they gave no small offence to the nation by one of their actions. They persuaded the Queen to seize the church of St. Giles in Edinburgh, which

[z] Lesley, 215. Castelnau, ap. Jebb, vol. ii. 446. 473.

[a] Davila, Brantome.

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had remained, ever since the late truce, in the hands of the Protestants; and having, by a new and solemn consecration, purified the fabric from the pollution with which they supposed the profane ministrations of the Protestants to have defiled it, they, in direct contradiction to one article in the late treaty, re-established there the rites of the Romish church. This, added to the indifference, and even contempt, with which the Queen received their remonstrances, convinced the Lords of the Congregation, that it was not only vain to expect any redress of their grievances at her hands, but absolutely necessary to take arms in their own defence.

They take arms in their own defence.

The eager and impetuous spirit of the nation, as well as every consideration of good policy, prompted them to take this bold step without delay. It was but a small part of the French auxiliaries which had as yet arrived. The fortifications of Leith, though advancing fast, were still far from being complete. Under these circumstances of disadvantage, they conceived it possible to surprise the Queen's party, and, by one sudden and decisive blow, to prevent all future bloodshed and contention. Full of these expectations, they advanced rapidly towards Edinburgh with a numerous army. But it was no easy matter to deceive an adversary as vigilant and attentive as the Queen Regent. With her usual sagacity, she both foresaw the danger, and took the only proper course to avoid it. Instead of keeping the field against enemies superior in number, and formidable on a day of battle by the ardour of their courage, she retired into

October 6.

Leith, and determined patiently to wait the arrival of new reinforcements. Slight and unfinished as the fortifications of that town then were, she did not dread the efforts of an army provided neither with heavy cannon nor with military stores, and little acquainted with the method of attacking any place fortified with more art than those ancient towers erected all over the kingdom in defence of private property against the incursions of banditti.

Nor did the Queen meanwhile neglect to have recourse to those arts which she had often employed to weaken or divide her adversaries. By private solicitations and promises she shook the fidelity, or abated the ardour, of some. By open reproach and accusation she blasted the reputation, and diminished the authority, of others. Her emissaries were every where at work, and, notwithstanding the zeal for religion and liberty which then animated the nation, they seem to have laboured not without success. We find Knox, about this period, abounding in complaints of the lukewarm and languid spirit which had begun to spread among his party[b]. But if their zeal slackened a little, and suffered a momentary intermission, it soon blazed up with fresh vigour, and rose to a greater height than ever.

Renew their remonstrances;

The Queen herself gave occasion to this, by the reply which she made to a new remonstrance from the Lords of the Congregation. Upon their arrival at Edinburgh, they once more represented to her the dangers arising from the increase of the French

[b] Knox, 180.

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troops, the fortifying of Leith, and her other measures, which they conceived to be destructive to the peace and liberty of the kingdom; and in this address they spoke in a firmer tone, and avowed, more openly than ever, their resolution of proceeding to the utmost extremities, in order to put a stop to such dangerous encroachments. To a remonstrance of this nature, and urged with so much boldness, the Queen replied in terms no less vigorous and explicit. She pretended that she was not accountable to the confederate lords for any part of her conduct; and upon no representation of theirs would she either abandon measures which she deemed necessary, or dismiss forces which she found useful, or demolish a fortification which might prove of advantage. At the same time she required them, on pain of treason, to disband the forces which they had assembled.

but without success.

This haughty and imperious style sounded harshly to Scottish nobles, impatient, from their national character, of the slightest appearance of injury; accustomed, even from their own monarchs, to the most respectful treatment; and possessing, under an aristocratical form of government, such a share of power, as equalled at all times, and often controlled, that of the sovereign. They were sensible, at once, of the indignity offered to themselves, and alarmed with this plain declaration of the Queen's intentions; and as there now remained but one step to take, they wanted neither public spirit nor resolution to take it.

But, that they might not seem to depart from

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the established forms of the constitution, for which, even amidst their most violent operations, men always retain the greatest reverence, they assembled all the peers, barons, and representatives of boroughs, who adhered to their party. These formed a convention, which exceeded in number, and equalled in dignity, the usual meetings of parliament. The leaders of the Congregation laid before them the declaration which the Queen had given in answer to their remonstrance; represented the unavoidable ruin which the measures she therein avowed and justified would bring upon the kingdom; and requiring their direction with regard to the obedience due to an administration so unjust and oppressive, they submitted to their decision a question, one of the most delicate and interesting that can possibly fall under the consideration of subjects.

This assembly proceeded to decide with no less dispatch than unanimity. Strangers to those forms which protract business; unacquainted with the arts which make a figure in debate; and much more fitted for action than discourse; a warlike people always hasten to a conclusion, and bring their deliberations to the shortest issue. It was the work but of one day to examine and to resolve this nice problem, concerning the behaviour of subjects towards a ruler who abuses his power. But, however abrupt their proceeding may appear, they were not destitute of solemnity. As the determination of the point in doubt was conceived to be no less the office of divines than of laymen, the former were called to assist with their opinion. Knox and Wil-

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lox appeared for the whole order, and pronounced, without hesitation, both from the precepts and examples in Scripture, that it was lawful for subjects not only to resist tyrannical Princes, but to deprive them of that authority, which, in their hands, becomes an instrument for destroying those whom the Almighty ordained them to protect. The decision of persons revered so highly for their sacred character, but more for their zeal and their piety, had great weight with the whole assembly. Not satisfied with the common indiscriminate manner of signifying consent, every person present was called in his turn to declare his sentiments; and rising up in order, all gave their suffrages, without one dissenting voice, for depriving the Queen of the office of Regent, which she exercised so much to the detriment of the kingdom[c].

They deprive the Queen of the office of Regent.

The motives of their conduct.

This extraordinary sentence was owing no less to the love of liberty, than to zeal for religion. In the act of deprivation, religious grievances are slightly mentioned; and the dangerous encroachments of the Queen upon the civil constitution are produced, by the Lords of the Congregation, in order to prove their conduct to have been not only just but necessary. The introducing foreign troops into a kingdom at peace with all the world; the seizing and fortifying towns in different parts of the country; the promoting strangers to offices of great power and dignity; the debasing the current coin[d]; the sub-

[c] Knox, 184.

[d] The standard of money in Scotland was continually varying. In the 16th of James V., A. D. 1529, a pound weight of gold, when coined, produced 108 pounds of current money.

verting the ancient laws; the imposing of new and burdensome taxes; and the attempting to subdue the kingdom, and to oppress its liberties, by open and repeated acts of violence, are enumerated at great length, and placed in the strongest light. On all these accounts, the Congregation maintained, that the nobles, as counsellors by birth-right to their monarchs, and the guardians and defenders of the constitution, had a right to interpose; and therefore, by virtue of this right, in the name of the King and Queen, and with many expressions of duty and submission towards them, they deprived the Queen Regent of her office, and ordained that, for the future, no obedience should be given to her commands[e].

Violent as this action may appear, there wanted not principles in the constitution, nor precedents in the history, of Scotland, to justify and to authorize it. Under the aristocratical form of government established among the Scots, the power of the sove-

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But under the Queen Regent's administration, A.D. 1556, a pound weight of gold, although the quantity of alloy was considerably increased, produced 144*l.* current money. In 1529, a pound weight of silver, when coined, produced 9*l.* 2*s.*; but in 1556, it produced 13*l.* current money. Ruddiman. Præfat. ad Anders. Diplomat. Scotiæ, p. 80, 81., from which it appears, that this complaint, which the malecontents often repeated, was not altogether destitute of foundation.

[e] M. Castelnau, after condemning the dangerous councils of the Princes of Lorrain, with regard to the affairs of Scotland, acknowledges, with his usual candour, that the Scots declared war against the Queen Regent, rather from a desire of vindicating their civil liberties, than from any motive of religion. Mem. 446.

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reign was extremely limited. The more considerable nobles were themselves petty Princes, possessing extensive jurisdictions, almost independent of the crown, and followed by numerous vassals, who, in every contest, espoused their chieftain's quarrel, in opposition to the King. Hence the many instances of the impotence of regal authority, which are to be found in the Scottish history. In every age, the nobles not only claimed, but exercised, the right of controlling the King. Jealous of their privileges, and ever ready to take the field in defence of them, every error in administration was observed, every encroachment upon the rights of the aristocracy excited indignation, and no Prince ever ventured to transgress the boundaries which the law had prescribed to prerogative, without meeting resistance, which shook or overturned his throne. Encouraged by the spirit of the constitution, and countenanced by the example of their ancestors, the Lords of the Congregation thought it incumbent on them, at this juncture, to inquire into the mal-administration of the Queen Regent, and to preserve their country from being enslaved or conquered, by depriving her of the power to execute such a pernicious scheme.

The act of deprivation, and a letter from the Lords of the Congregation to the Queen Regent, are still extant[f]. They discover not only that masculine and undaunted spirit, natural to men capable of so bold a resolution; but are remarkable for a precision and vigour of expression, which we are surprised to

[f] Knox, 184.

meet with in an age so unpolished. The same observation may be made with respect to the other public papers of that period. The ignorance or bad taste of an age may render the compositions of authors by profession obscure, or affected, or absurd: but the language of business is nearly the same at all times; and wherever men think clearly, and are thoroughly interested, they express themselves with perspicuity and force.

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